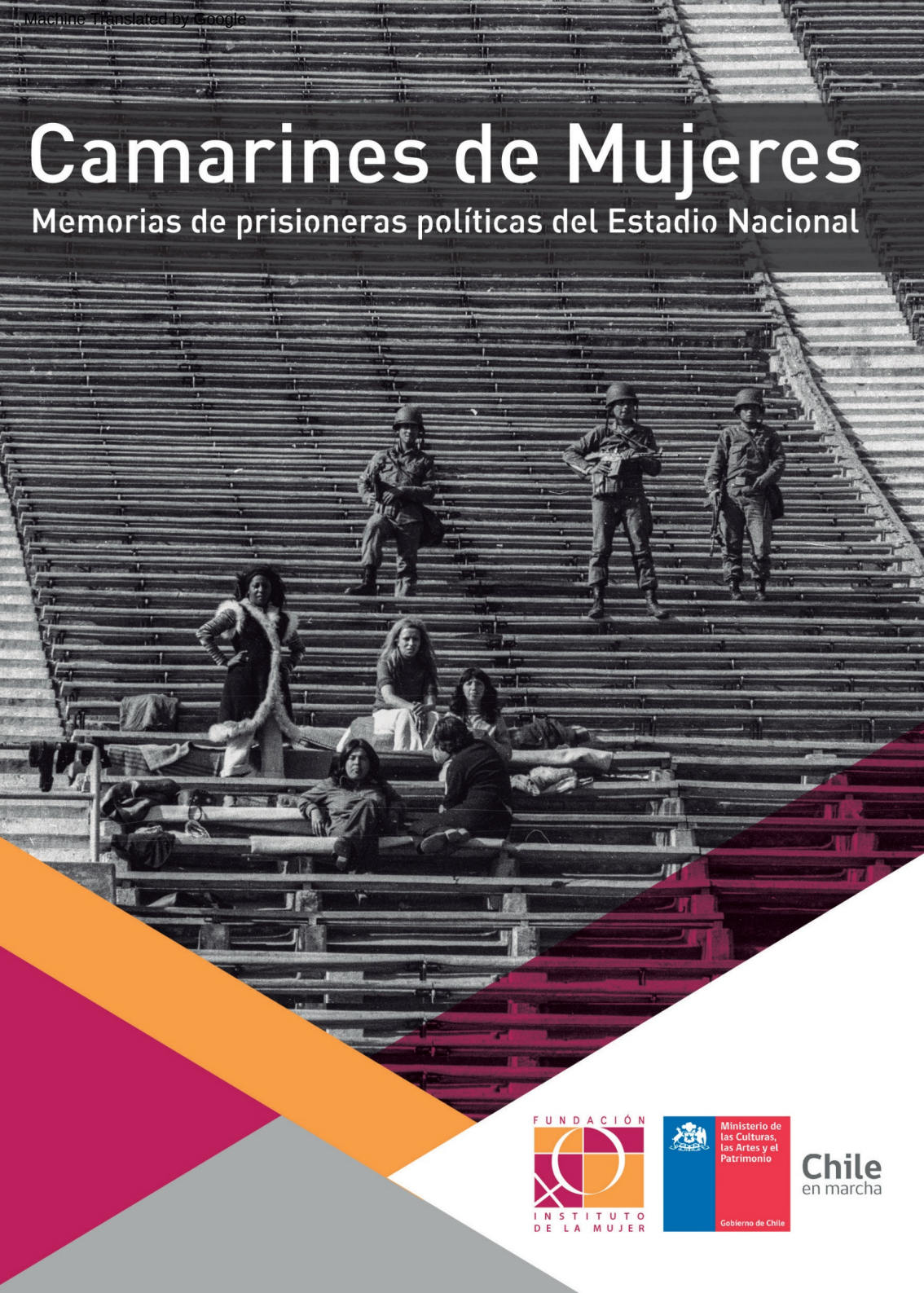


Camarines de Mujeres

Memorias de prisioneras políticas del Estadio Nacional



Camarines de Mujeres

Memorias de prisioneras políticas del Estado Nacional



Chile
en marcha

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PRESENTATION

“Women’s Dressing Rooms. Memoirs of Political Prisoners of the National Stadium” is a book that invites us not to forget and to protect memory as the greatest wealth for a country.

Safeguarding the memory of women is a political, social, and heritage act that enriches a country and, above all, the new generations, who are the hope for a better future.

The Women’s Institute Foundation thanks Ximena, Lucia, Maria, Cecilia, Nuria, Silvia and Oriana, who generously shared their memories and testimonies as women survivors of one of the detention centers used by the civic-military dictatorship.

Each of the testimonies keeps the memory of the protagonists alive, promoting among new generations a civic exercise, protective in the defense of the human rights of the people who live in our territory.

**Women’s Institute Foundation
Santiago, Chile, June 2019**

Prologue

The National Stadium must be one of the most emblematic of all the places used as detention centers after the coup in Chile. Located in the heart of the city, it was a hub of activity, with people both inside and outside the stadium, desperately trying to get news of their loved ones.

It's impossible to imagine that the residents of Santiago were unaware of the new use being given to the stadium that, a decade earlier, had hosted the World Cup. The press even had access to certain areas of the facility, as the Military Junta wanted them to see and report that the detainees were enjoying a comfortable stay, concealing the torture chambers and the most vulnerable individuals. The world thus learned that, in Chile, tens of thousands of Chilean men and women were imprisoned without charge or conviction in a sports complex, their fate unknown, and their families unaware of their presence.

When they were released, without knowing how or why, they were given a certificate attesting to the dates of their time at the Stadium, a statement indicating that they had not been mistreated, and a commitment not to participate in any kind of political activity in the future.

The visibility and scale with which the regime operated in this sporting arena demonstrates the complete impunity with which they acted throughout the dictatorship, and especially during the first few months. They never intended to hide or deny it; at most, they justified it in the name of the order necessary for the new era the country was experiencing.

Political imprisonment and torture serve many purposes, and in this case, undoubtedly, in addition to punishing those who had supported Popular Unity, or were simply suspected of doing so, it was also intended to instill terror in the rest of the population. The multiplier effect created by the visibility and scale of the arrests is designed to paralyze these individuals and their relatives or acquaintances. It moves us from "they must have done something" to "it could happen to anyone", without pause or respite.

The National Stadium functioned as a detention camp for two months, until the date of the World Cup qualifying match between Chile and the former Soviet Union (USSR), for a place in the 1974 World Cup in Germany, as if nothing were amiss. The attempt to project an image of normalcy was shattered by the USSR team's decision not to attend the match, even though it meant their elimination. This gesture would be the first of many from around the world in solidarity with the victims of the dictatorship.

Among those arrested at the stadium were also women. Workers, students, housewives, women of different ages and social classes. And to this day, forty-six years later, there are practically no testimonies recounting their experience. They are far fewer than the men, but it seems it has also been much more difficult for them to put into words what they saw and lived through there.

This book is the first to compile only women's testimonies, so that we can learn about their experiences, but above all, to offer them a space of dignity and redress after so much time. Speaking and listening are undoubtedly a necessary process for the victims, but also for society as a whole to confront a past that continues to haunt the present.

Among the testimonies presented here is that of my grandmother. And that is why I have been invited to present it. Yes, because my role as a historian specializing in this subject would be inconceivable without the former. Knowing from a very young age that my grandmother had been imprisoned in the stadium has been a profound marker of my identity. Just as some children define themselves by their skin color or religion, I had a grandmother who had been imprisoned. This placed me in a specific position within society, that of the vanquished. It also meant that I should remain silent, not out of shame but out of fear, and not

It also meant the need to learn more and more and to find a desolate landscape, which sometimes led me to normalize, or worse, minimize our family experience—privileged, if you will, compared to so many dead. Then I think of the foundational image of my memory: my parents, my aunt Cristina, and me in the car outside the stadium, hoping to see my grandmother. I suppose no one, at any time or place, can think that visiting their grandmother in a concentration camp is normal, and although there are undoubtedly much deeper sorrows, for my grandmother this is the worst of all, because she suffered it firsthand.

I don't have a firsthand memory of those events, but they are part of my memory and my present work. Much of what I do has been a way of... to comfort her.

Now she is quite old, she confuses some things, she forgets others, but the act of giving her testimony for this book makes her very proud. And for me it is very important to know that she lived long enough to speak and be read.

I hope this has the same effect on all the women featured here, and that it encourages many others to share their experiences, but above all, that it inspires thousands of readers to offer them comfort as well, to empathize with their wounds, and to respect them even more.

I believe this is also very important for their families, who in some cases will be able to learn things they were too afraid to ask. Perhaps they will find some answers here, and maybe the opportunity to begin a long-postponed dialogue. Or a way to tell their children and grandchildren what was so difficult to put into words. But above all, so that those who didn't live through it can feel this story as their own.

We must thank the authors for this important work, where oral history is once again put at the service of memory.

Gathering these voices is just the beginning of a much longer-term task.

It is hoped that this book will be read with empathy and solidarity, to understand our history, to offer reparations to its victims, and to learn from their suffering as well as their resilience. May it serve to educate us about respect for human rights, may it be read in schools, may we debate time and again the need to end impunity, and may we understand that this is a task that involves not only the courts of justice, but also the action and recognition of each and every one of us. May the lesson of these pages be that defending life and human dignity is not only the responsibility of those who have been wronged, but of anyone who considers themselves part of humanity. This is a good start.

Carla Peñaloza Palma

INTRODUCTION

When the key to words is opened

Writing about women's memories of Chile's recent past is a work in progress.¹ Almost 47 years after the coup, little has been written and researched about experiences like those made visible in this book, which took place in the National Stadium, the country's main sports field used as a detention and torture center during the first months of Pinochet's civic-military dictatorship (1973-1990).

Images, accounts, and testimonies regarding time spent in this facility are scarce compared to the large number of people held there, and they mostly deal with the experiences of political prisoners who, due to the organization within the facility, had almost no daily contact with the women who were imprisoned there.²

Making visible the memories of female political prisoners in this sporting arena aims to contribute to building a history that focuses on women's experiences of resistance, understood as a collective subject that has always been an active part of our history as a society and a country. Furthermore, we want to offer the women whose stories we published in the latest chapter a safe space and a platform for recognition, a stark contrast to the lack of justice and awareness among younger generations regarding this issue.

The way in which we present in this book the life trajectories of the seven women who opened up to remember and narrate these experiences is because we understand prison as a moment in the women's biographies; a moment

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1. Works that, from a historical perspective, recount experiences of organization and resistance have enabled women to enter written history; however, they can be identified mainly as belonging to the period of the first struggles and women's organizations.

2. Certainly, these personal accounts, mostly written in the first person, have been useful for the process of historical reconstruction of that experience and of this research.

which they were able to cope with, as we will see, in diverse ways. This allows us to avoid falling into the trap of victimization that relegates those who experienced imprisonment and torture, particularly women, solely to suffering, without paying attention to the resilience that made it possible for them to rise up and move forward despite the ordeal they endured.

The stories of those who agreed to be interviewed have moments of great pain; however, they also show that the women generated individual and collective strategies that allowed them to cope, enabling them to move forward with their lives once they left prison.

This reinforces the idea that the progress women have made through collective action has its roots in the women who came before us, and in turn, in those who came before them. This underscores the importance of highlighting how women collectively resisted the dictatorship, especially understanding how they did so within the context of political imprisonment.

We want to thank all those who generously agreed to share their lives to give substance to this project, despite how difficult it was for some to begin speaking about this period: Oriana Aravena Aguirre, María Garreaud Muñoz, Ximena George-Nascimento Lara, Silvia Leiva Gómez, Lucía Neira Rivas, and Cecilia Riveros De la Maza. And, in a special way, Nuria Núñez Rius, founder and current President of the Board of Directors of the Women's Institute, who first conceived the idea of researching and writing about the women prisoners at the National Stadium, and who was willing to share her story and open the network of contacts with which we began this search for witnesses.

From the beginning, we were interested in collecting the experiences of women who, having in common the fact that they had been detained in the National Stadium, responded to diverse characteristics and conditions: having had or not having party militancy, having belonged to different organizations, or coming from different experiences and social origins.

The objective was to show the subjectivities and particularities of these memories also traversed by other identities; respecting the way in which the same facts and events are elaborated from the present in multiple ways.

The research consisted of a first stage of documentary review regarding imprisonment in the National Stadium and the repressive context, paying particular attention to the forms of violence specifically perpetrated against women. In a second stage, we conducted interviews with former prisoners, using a structured interview guide.

The questions served as a guide and covered not only the period of incarceration, but also sought to investigate who they were, what they did before and after prison, how they organized themselves during their detentions, what ties and bonds were forged, and even what were the moments when they were able to resist and laugh.

The interviews were conducted with informed consent, and the interviewees were able to read and approve their statements, respecting the confidentiality of anything they chose not to make public. They also provided us with personal documents that contribute to the reconstruction of their biographies, which are available on the website that accompanies this book.³ There, the photographs and documents create a timeline in which individual experiences are linked to the recent collective history of the country.

For some of the interviewees, it was a complex task. Several women contacted declined to be interviewed or regretted it after the initial conversation, while some participants were recounting this experience for the first time. Several accounts revealed moments when they wanted to speak out but found no one listening, not even among the people they were speaking to.

nearest.

The above illustrates the need to continue advancing in the work of recording these memories, overcoming the obstacles of those who do not dare to recount what they have experienced so as not to cause suffering in others, as well as those who have not been available to listen, maintaining a veil of stigma and silence over repressive violence.

Speaking and remembering in the process meant meeting more than once to complete the task. Narrating and revisiting their own stories, written on paper after the interviews were transcribed and then transformed into narratives, evoked powerful emotions in the women who shared their experiences. Picking up the thread of their lives—censored primarily by a media that has refused to listen—unleashed a torrent of words. These flowed forth in torrents, as if they had been held back, suddenly ready to explode.

Once the interviews began, we observed that most of the witnesses shared a second period of detention, in the El Buen Pastor Women's Correctional Prison in Santiago, the place to which they were transferred after the stadium was closed as a detention center in November 1973.

at the Women's Correctional Facility, "the Corre," the arrest took on a more serious character

.....
3. www.insmujer.cl/camarinesdemujeres

permanent, allowing the generation of bonds that made it possible to withstand the confinement and the uncertainty of what might happen to their lives.

The stories shared showed us that, in addition to sex and gender, social background was also a significant dimension in the lived experience and its interpretation. We explicitly highlight this aspect, as it challenges the notion of a homogenous whole that constantly obscures the differences and inequalities that distinguish us as women and that, at the same time, constitute us as a collective.

The paths their lives took after their arrests are as diverse as the women themselves. No two stories are exactly alike.

Subsequent developments have depended on the steps they continued to take, as well as the new events that have shaken their lives.

Some former activists abandoned their political involvement, while others maintained it. Some have shifted their allegiances to new political affiliations and personal and social projects. For some, the fear of speaking out persists—and as we noted, several declined when invited to participate in this project—while for others, this research allowed them to piece together the fragments of anecdotes that few want to hear at family gatherings, transforming them into a more complete narrative. In several cases, writing has been a way to rework this and other complex moments in their lives, and a creative therapy that has allowed them to move beyond trauma by putting their experiences into words.

Beyond these differences, all seven interviewees agreed that their personal stories were part of this swarm of collective narratives that, incidentally, form part of the history of a country and a region. In this process, the outbursts and whispers also touched us, the researchers-listeners, transforming us.

The historical significance of these personal accounts lies in the fact that the uniqueness of each experience can represent, at the same time, a universal experience, shared by diverse social groups in different places and contexts of political imprisonment.

Reconstructing women's memories also involves uncovering specific forms and mechanisms of repression, as well as the strategies undertaken to confront and resist punishments that had gender specificities.

In this sense, the stories told here confirm that what these women experienced has particularities, and that knowing them and making them public broadens the range of what our past has been and, indeed, what our future could be.

These peculiarities refer not only to how they experienced the violence and its characteristics—for example, gender-based sexual violence—but also to the mechanisms they developed personally and collectively to cope with these moments and rebuild their lives. This is what allowed them, almost 47 years later, to recount the events that had remained unspoken or shared only among those who had been directly involved.

The book, in its first part, offers a theoretical discussion regarding testimony and the gender perspective as methods for accessing narratives about state terrorism in the country's recent history. Following this, in the second chapter, the author reconstructs the historical context of the Pinochet dictatorship, delving into the manifestations of state repression and how it affected the lives of women, with particular attention to the experiences in the detention centers addressed in this book. Finally, the third chapter presents the accounts of the seven interviewees, compiled from the interviews conducted.

In each one, an effort was made to maintain the rhythm, strength, and personal character that the interviewee imprinted on the narration of her memoirs.

These stories are a gift primarily for new generations who can hear the voices of the protagonists of the period we are remembering, approaching the recent past through the everyday experiences of these women who wanted to make their stories public as a personal act of reworking and liberation, and also as a political act.

These guardians of memory opened the doors to share them with society, especially with new generations. Personal memories acquire political meaning when we offer them to the collective, using that space to ask questions about the past in order to shape the present and future we desire.

Remember, listen, learn.
The contributions of testimony
with a gender perspective to
memory work

Tamara Vidaurrezaga Aránguiz

CHAPTER I

Remember, listen, learn.

**The contributions of testimony with
a gender perspective to memory work⁴**

We have spoken
words, words to awaken the
dead, words to make a fire,
words where we can sit and
smile.

Ashes, Alejandra Pizarnik

Listening to women is always an act of rebellion in a society where the feminine voice is still considered taboo. Authorized as virtuous mothers, passive victims, or suffering lovers, stories that transgress the rigid stereotypes of mandated femininity are unsettling. Because they remind us that woman doesn't exist as a single entity, but rather that we are many and varied individuals who make up this category, forcibly imprisoned despite our differences, to make us more palatable as "others."

When male voices still dominate the world, pausing to listen to those who came before us is a political and subversive act. It means recognizing them as valuable predecessors, acknowledging the experiences they passed on to us, and the paths they paved for those who came after, and for those who will follow.

We must acknowledge that we are not starting from scratch, but rather that we have a collective history. That we have played a leading role in historical events.

4. This chapter was written by Dr. Tamara Vidaurrezaga Aránguiz.

and lived experiences not archived in timelines, because they were presumed irrelevant to an official history that focuses on public spaces and certain aspects of the processes.

Listen, ask questions, learn. Bring to mind those other women from different periods of history. Understand how they acted, what decisions they made, what caused them suffering, and the resistance strategies they employed.

Translating her words into a text through this book seeks to leave her experiences for posterity, because, as the Argentine sociologist Elizabeth Jelin mentions, experiences broaden when we incorporate into our lives those stories that are told to us.

Women were victims of the repression that Pinochet's civic-military dictatorship inflicted on the general population. But above all, we want to emphasize that they were also part of the resistance. Not only against state terrorism, but also against a way of life imposed during this period, which transformed the dynamics of Chile.

Because not only politics and the economy changed radically, but also the ways in which this society related, breaking the notion of community, instilling distrust and an exacerbated individualism that governs us.

Individualism for which younger generations know no alternative, partly because stories of how to live without so much desire for accumulation, seeking common well-being and working collectively for it, have been ignored.

The stories of these women tell us about the experience of confinement in the National Stadium or in the El Buen Pastor correctional facility, a prison where some of these prisoners were transferred when the sports field was closed as a repressive space.

But they also recount the dreams of the generation of the sixties and seventies. The aspirations placed on a government that sought to improve the conditions of those who lived worst, without having to use weapons, at a time when guerrilla warfare seemed the only possible way out of violent inequality (Gilman, 2003).

Silvia Leiva recalls her life as a resident, and the hopes she had with the triumph of Allende and the Popular Unity (1970-1973)⁵ as follows:

For those of us who participated, and who had already experienced the failure of Allende's three previous attempts, we felt as if our dreams were beginning to come true, hope was returning, and besides, I came from a shantytown, from a land occupation, and we felt that new possibilities for life were approaching. A life with more rights for (...) those of us who were homeless, who are also workers, students, farmers, even Mapuche.

The testimonies tell the story of this country, located in a remote place, on which, during this period, the entire planet focused its attention, even those who suspected that a peaceful electoral strategy would be insufficient to radically transform the world. They speak of a time when, for a thousand days, Chile was a beacon of hope: Perhaps weapons wouldn't be necessary, nor would dying or killing. Perhaps, with joy, volunteer work, and conviction, this land of mountains and sea could teach the rest of the world a lesson.

The testimonies recount what the commitment required by the urgent needs of the period meant for the daily lives of those who tell their stories. How to be mothers, partners, activists, daughters, when the turbulent times of the Popular Unity government indicated that it was time to risk everything for a cause that was well worth the effort.

Oriana Aravena remembers the period in the following way:

Allende's rise to the presidency was a beautiful dream. Just mentioning it brings back so many images: going out into the streets, singing – “and you will come, marching beside me...” – and all those things. We dreamed so much!

.....
5. After the 1970 elections, Salvador Allende Gossens assumed the presidency of the country. His government was known as the Popular Unity (UP) period, named after the coalition of left-wing parties formed in 1959 that supported him and led him to electoral victory. This coalition implemented policies that attempted to establish a socialist state democratically, known as "the Chilean road to socialism." His government faced an internal economic and financial crisis resulting from economic boycotts imposed by US foreign policy and by the Chilean right wing itself. His presidency ended brutally with the civic-military coup of September 11, 1973. On that day, after the La Moneda Palace was bombed by planes and tanks, he committed suicide, refusing to relinquish his office by force.

They also recount what came next: the coup and the defeat of the collective dream they had each worked toward from different places and with varying degrees of intensity; the difficulty of believing in the magnitude of the horror that was to come; the disappearances and deaths of loved ones; and the repression they experienced firsthand.

The stadium was not only a detention and torture center, where the aim was to dehumanize the prisoners by stripping them of their basic dignity, but also a space where indelible friendships were forged. They detail everyday aspects of their confinement that went unnoticed in reports and heroic accounts. They acknowledge the fear, the mistrust, and the help provided by the young jailer who did not choose that role, as Lucía Neira recalls in her account of the stadium.

We were guarded by young conscripts, and I said to one of them, "Could you send me this little note?" What I asked for, my friends remember, is also funny: a lettuce. I was so desperate to eat something like that, because they never gave us raw vegetables, not even parsley.

Oriana also remembers these moments of humanity as things that helped her cope with confinement:

Oddly enough, the soldier who was inspecting me said, "Here's a pencil. Look in your pockets for any papers and write down your name and a number. I'll let you know where you are." After the search was over and I handed him the paper, he opened the door and shouted, "To the locker room with the prisoner."

They remember their time in prison and its dynamics. The meals prepared by a female inmate whom they all respected. The collective resistance to their suffering: theater, music, writing, laughter, and confessions among the women. Their release and the new lives they began, in many cases outside of Chile.

And then came what followed. Because life went on for all of them. With varying degrees of difficulty and the lingering effects of painful experiences, as well as the happy period that preceded it. Facing what lay ahead: motherhood and earning a living. Returning to their homeland for those who had been in exile. And for others, a partial return or settling abroad, now their new home.

Wanting to speak but not being heard. Keeping these experiences to themselves, sharing them with peers who knew the hardships endured in the stadium. Learning to remain silent in the face of those who, seeking to protect them, turned a deaf ear to this period.

And daring to tell us their stories decades later. Generously sharing them with the community, in a work of memory that involved reworking them in perspective, observing them with the eyes of who they are today, and making them part of the web of lives that make up our recent past.

1. Narrating with a gender perspective

Telling the stories of these women, and above all asking them, requires work with a gender perspective, which involves highlighting their stories as subjects socially mandated to a secondary and victimized place.

And, at the same time, to attend to those everyday issues of their lives, understanding that history is not only made up of the great milestones recognized in school books, but also of these minutiae that often determine a large part of the decisions made, but which in the historical narrative are restricted to the shadows.

Feminist theory and the gender perspective have shown that we live in an unequal society, in which power is concentrated in the hands of a few, an inequality that is also naturalized as if it were a product of biology.

And that, in this distribution, women find themselves at the bottom of the pyramid, being the poorest among the poor, those who die as a result of sexist violence in the streets and in homes, without the right to decide about our bodies or life projects, discriminated against even among our subordinate colleagues.

And they have also observed how this inequality has no roots in nature or biology, arguments still used as excuses to keep us in constant subjection, sometimes transformed, but always in force; arbitrarily and in a diverse way, according to each culture, society and historical period, what it means to be a "good woman" (Rubin, 1986).

As the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir wrote early on, in the 1950s, women are not born, but made. This is achieved through the process of shaping

Our actions, emotions, rationalities, and even bodies and imprints with repeated actions remind us of what we are, not in an essential way but by dint of repetition (Butler, 2007).

One of the characteristics of this patriarchal society has been to make invisible how women have been part of the history of our peoples, how we have had agency and protagonism in different periods (Scott, 2008), stories that we are interested in highlighting through these seven stories, which at the same time tell us about those others with whom they shared the narrated experiences.

The gender perspective not only involves telling women's stories, but also telling them with suspicion of the rigid stereotypes in which we have been encapsulated, for example, becoming constant victims of events, a matter that these narratives call into question.

It also means that the focus of the questions—and of the listening that often stifles the words of the person testifying—is not only on public milestones, but also on what the Argentine critic Nicolás Casullo calls those “unimportant matters”: love stories, an anecdote about the children, preparing a meal in prison. Those clandestine letters and stories that came out to say “I love you.” The laughter despite everything.

2. “We had to find a way to distract ourselves.”

Shifting the focus allows us to highlight what happened in the personal sphere and understand it as something political as well. At the same time, it makes it possible to learn about the resistance strategies that allowed them to continue their lives, such as art and laughter in the midst of prison.

María Garreaud recalls an episode amidst the brutal repression experienced in the The National Stadium as a relevant landmark that helped it resist:

Despite all the hardships and hunger, there was still some humor left. In the afternoons, before they locked us up, there was a theater performance, a show. One day a car arrived with used clothes—skirts, blouses, and vests—and we divided them up, making use of whatever we could. On that occasion, one of the detainees, a Spanish teacher, invented a fashion show. We had to find a way to distract ourselves.

In that same place, where everything seemed brutally and senselessly cruel, collective gestures like the one recalled by Cecilia Riveros revealed rays of light that reminded those who were confined that they were still people:

I remember one day, while we were waiting in the galleries, something really nice happened: we were there, I don't know how many. There were maybe 5,000 or 6,000 of us. We watched them mowing the field with the carts. And then, suddenly, one of the carts went into the goal and we all shouted loudly and in unison: "Gooooo!"

Lucía recalls the play performed later, when they were prisoners in La Correccional, after being transferred there when the stadium closed:

It was like we were on a train, going somewhere. There was a soldier, and Isabel Miranda dressed up as a man. I played a prostitute (...) in a little skirt someone lent me, it came down to here, it didn't cover anything, you could see my underwear, all made up and everything (...). Everyone was laughing, everyone was joking, everyone was laughing. The soldier who played Isabel Miranda... we looked like actresses. So we made a lot of people laugh, even the nuns were laughing. And at the end, Monique, who sang beautifully, she was Chilean-Belgian, did a striptease while singing (...) and taking off layers and layers of clothes, that was the point, she was

These stories tell us about what the German critic Andreas Huyssen pointed out when he called for not exclusively housing memories in trauma and victimization, indicating that the past is more than a prison of unhappiness (2001).

This is doubly relevant in the case of women, who have historically been placed in the position of passive victims without agency regarding our lives and historical processes.

6. In the list of women detained at the National State Prison, she appears as Luisa Isabel Miranda Alarcón, later being transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility. In the list of detainees at the latter, appearing in the 1974 United Nations (UN) report, she is listed as Isabel Miranda Alarcón. See <http://www.archivomuseodelamemoria.cl/uploads/5/8/58049/G7502410.pdf>

7. Monique was Mónica Hermosilla Jordens, who was held in the Stadium and later in La Correccional and who is remembered in several of the stories presented.

This reductionism is also based on what has resulted in a diminished narrative authority regarding the recent past in countries of the region where there were dictatorial repressions. This is what the Catalan historian Ricard Vinyes calls “memorial biologism” (2009), an authority rooted in the damage suffered by the body and mind of the individual, as an asset of transmissible memory.

In other words, the right to speak about past violence stems from a close connection to the suffering and devastation of repression. This translates into greater authority, having personally experienced these torments, an authority that is also passed on to close relatives. At the same time, it deprives the rest of the citizenry of the right to debate the past, and therefore to critically examine the futures we want—a matter that, according to Vinyes (2016), should be both a civic responsibility and a right.

For this author, suffering cannot be established as a common denominator and authority of transmissible memory, since –although it must be known because it was the result of the violation of people's rights– it was the practices of transgression against these authoritarian regimes that were common to the resistance and opposition to the dictatorships (Vinyes, 2009).

This refers not only to actions framed within political activism, but to all practices of informal citizen dissent aimed at rejecting the violent imposition of state terrorism. This is because, while pain is an experience, transgression is a recoverable value, a democratic heritage and, therefore, a legacy to be passed down through time (Vinyes, 2009).

The accounts describe diverse situations during the Popular Unity period, although most were activists, a fact that Silvia recounts with pride, indicating that few women participated politically at that time, stating:

(...) in that period there weren't many women who got involved in politics, and even fewer as leaders of movements like land occupations, going out to confront, because, although we were very young we still had to face repression and so it marked my life to the extent that that experience of New Havana⁸ (...) came to influence the southeastern area of

8. The Nueva Habana Camp emerged as a result of a land occupation promoted by the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) in 1970 as part of the popular power strategy adopted by this organization.

National Health Service. We were part of the joint council; that is, as a representative of the residents of Nueva Habana, I had the same rights and the same vote as doctors, midwives, and nurses when health policies for the area were being discussed. Because, of course, those of us who were representatives of the communities knew exactly where the needs were, and we could bring that right to the table not based on party interests... but rather on our own, because health is a right. We, as residents, also reached agreements with other camps in other communities.

Of course, it is important to listen to the accounts of these women's painful and traumatic experiences, as they reveal the abuses committed and establish responsibility for them, giving us tools to reflect on the society we have today and the one we want.

build.

We were interested in learning about these "everyday resistances", in the words of Michel De Certeau (2000), who indicates that it is in this space where not only compliance with dominant systems occurs – in this case dictatorial power, as well as with gender norms – but also resistances that deserve to be made visible and addressed.

This is because, as Michel Foucault (2008) indicates, power relations exist in all areas of life, and where there is power there will be resistance to it.

In this sense, the relevance of everyday life is also linked to the place of enunciation resulting from the experiences and conditions arising from gender mandates, whether they have been accepted, resisted, or subverted.

All the stories recount subversions of gender norms from different perspectives, generally showing pride in this. They describe being left to raise children after becoming a widow, being active in political parties, navigating male-dominated worlds, and succeeding.

Ximena George-Nascimento recounts how, in the 1960s, she already had activities that were uncommon for her peers:

I met Margot Duhalde . We were the only women piloting there. My husband was also a pilot, from the University Aviation Club. We had all the little planes from

Santiago at our disposal. Of course, at that time there were only two airfields, plus one for gliders.

Cecilia reveals her discomfort with sexism when she recounts how on the day of the coup she arrived at the meeting point with another colleague and they were ordered to prepare a soup that, moreover, had to have previously peeled shrimp, so that the colleagues could discuss what to do, a matter that horrified her:

It was unbelievable! We were there for something else, not to make "soup" for some guys who were being picky! It was such an important moment, and they wanted to eat shrimp tails! I thought it was the worst!

Besides, why didn't they peel the shrimp? Why did we? I've always been quite feminist in that sense, maybe because my mom and dad raised my sister and me that way.

Well, we both left.

Likewise, the narratives emphasize issues relevant to the women testifying, given their social position as mothers, primarily within a patriarchal society, but also because of the hours they spent with their children due to this role. For example—and in the case of this book—the significance of the consequences of these repressions for the children, a matter that these women can hardly ignore.

Oriana remembers the moment they were about to arrest her and how her first thought was to leave some level of protection for her children who were sleeping at that moment, thinking that perhaps she would never see them again:

I asked permission to say goodbye to them. I took the opportunity to go to my room and took a small bag from the dresser containing four or five pieces of jewelry that had been kept since my childhood, family heirlooms.

.....
9. Margot Duhalde was the first woman to graduate as a civilian pilot in Chile in 1938. She lied to join the Chilean Air Force (FACH), claiming she met the age requirement (20 years old, although she was 16). When World War II broke out, she traveled to Europe and served as a pilot for the Free French Forces. In 1947, she returned to Chile and worked as a private and commercial pilot. Later, she became the FACH's Chief of Air Traffic Control.

I gently approached my eldest son's bed, who was six years old at the time, and placed it under his pillow.

The importance of everyday life, as a space to examine in order to understand how the past is reworked, lies in the fact that various voices converge in this space, but confrontations also arise between different positions, and generations can engage in dialogue and debate. At the same time, it is in this space that good times are remembered, even amidst horror, reminding us that life continues to have meaning and that it is possible to persevere despite the storms.

As we already mentioned, in the testimonies presented, and far from referring only to the pain, these women are grateful "to have met fantastic people" as Nuria Núñez relates, referring to fellow prisoners such as Dr. Gálvez¹⁰, María Cecilia Yáñez, the "Condorito"¹¹, or Lucy Lortsch¹², whom he describes as "extraordinary women", highlighting their presence during this difficult period of his life:

(...) the bonds, the solidarity, the support, them being there for you when you're feeling down, or you being there for the others, sharing. Sharing what little you had, if you had anything at all you shared it... or things like that, so I think that was a learning experience and it was beautiful.

10. Dr. Laura Elena Gálvez was detained at the National Stadium and later transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility. Her name appears on the list of women imprisoned there, which was included in the United Nations (UN) 1974 Report on Human Rights Violations in Chile. See: <http://www.archivomuseodelamemoria.cl/uploads/5/8/58049/G7502410.pdf>

11. María Cecilia Yáñez was detained in the National Stadium and in the Women's Correctional Facility. She was known among the detainees as "La Condorito" or "La Condoro," apparently because of the type of sandals she wore (similar to the character from the Chilean comic strips, Condorito). As some of the accounts in this book show, she represented a source of joy and inspiration for many of the incarcerated women because of her un-

12. In documents Lucy Lortsch is referred to as a writer, historian and printmaker. In these references, her name is spelled with variations. In the list of women detained at the National State, she appears as Lucy Lortsch Ravett. The 1974 UN report, for its part, mentions her as Lucy Lortsch under the subheading of "detained personalities," where she is identified as a "writer and leader of the Chilean Employees Association"; and as Lucy Lortsch, among people whose "place of detention is unknown." A press release from August 25, 1973 ("Author of historical defamation identified," *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, August 25, 1973, p. 26), presents her as Lucy Lortsch, author of the book *Chapters of the History of Chile*, published under a pseudonym, which allegedly earned the "repudiation" of "military and historical circles" for "defaming" the national hero, Bernardo O'Higgins. This fact then led to his capture and confinement

Cecilia remembers the birthday celebration they decided to hold for the beloved Condorito in the National Stadium's swimming pool, despite the conditions they were in, using all their imagination and resilience, a moment she recounts as follows:

It was her birthday, and we all loved Condoro very much.
And we said, "Let's throw him a birthday party" (...)
We picked little flowers, made little bouquets of flowers for her, another one had one Orange. Because the fruits and things that came from outside, that they wouldn't let in, we generally gave to the pregnant women. I mean, preference was given to the pregnant women, so they would have apples, oranges, the very best. What was left was for us, which was very little. So we used an orange, we made little gifts for Condoro. Imagine, I don't know how many there were on this side, and on the other side. It was 100 meters, so we dressed up. At the pool (...) one would arrive with something: the ambassador of Romania, Her Excellency. She was on a throne, because she was the princess, the queen (...) they would arrive with the orange, another with a little something... because there was a girl who made sculptures with soap. Beautiful (...) This girl made chess pieces out of soap. (...) We gave her something that each of us made, but that was there. And she's on her throne, and they all arrived, the ambassador and her entourage... nothing could be more beautiful. Then in a minute (...) we sang happy birthday to him.

Lucía remembers the selfless solidarity of the domestic worker who cared for her son, and who until the moment of her husband's disappearance had been a very reserved woman, highlighting this type of support that she never expected and that made these bitter moments less hard:

Less than a week had passed when Eliana, the housekeeper we'd had before the coup, showed up. I explained that I couldn't keep paying her. I was out of work. "Okay, ma'am!" she said, terse as ever. She left, but a few days later she returned with a sack of coffee, detergent, and sugar: "Here, ma'am, I heard Don Arsenio isn't here," she told me. Her gesture surprised me, because during the Popular Unity government she'd always given us dirty looks.

She frowned. She wasn't a supporter of our ideas. "I'm coming to work with you, to take care of Pablito!" she added.

Narrating by giving space to everyday life allows us to understand experiences that might go unnoticed with another approach, or that would reduce experiences, such as prison, exclusively to trauma, preventing us from understanding the complexity of the human beings who lived through these processes and their capacity to resist and reverse what could have been just pain, transforming them into memorable and even beautiful moments after the passage of years.

3. Possibilities and limitations of working with testimonies

When working with testimonies, it is essential to recognize that these narratives are reinterpretations of the past from the present. Therefore, what is revealed is directly linked to who the narrator is today, making a selection of the past consistent with what they wish to say about themselves, as the Austrian historian and sociologist Michael Pollak (2006) states.

The narrative recreates the experience through memories, interpreting the past from a present that gives it a new meaning (Kaufman, 2014), and being out of sync with the events narrated, since –as the Argentine sociologists Claudia Bacci and Alejandra Oberti indicate– testimonies are acts through which the past is updated in the present (2014).

These types of narratives contribute to the reconstruction of the recent past, and at the same time it is relevant to assume that in these discourses, following the French historian Henry Rousso, some segments of what happened will be erased through forgetting, composing "a different landscape of the past" (2002).

This device allows the experience to be shared with those who were not there. In this way, new generations, and anyone willing to listen, can learn from the narrated experience, increasing their own knowledge of the unlived past, if they manage to incorporate it.

Testimonial accounts are always subjective and reveal the specificity of the narrator, with "the subject appearing as a singular witness," as stated by the Argentine psychologist and specialist in traumas resulting from political violence, Susana Ka

Part of this uniqueness, in the case of the interviewees in this book, are the gender conditions and mandates with which they were socialized and which they had to live in, understanding that memories are possible within certain social frameworks and not in others (Halbawchs, 2004).

Whether memories are more or less audible depends on the existence of suitable frameworks for collective listening; these conditions of possibility also stem from the context of what is generally acceptable in a specific time and place. This implies that social frameworks exist that accept or sanction different behaviors in men and women, and that these frameworks depend on gender norms.

So, what can and cannot be said is also linked to these social gender expectations, which dictate what can and cannot be said publicly for women, as well as to the awareness, after the passage of years, of that unequal place we inhabit in society, a matter that in the seventies was not necessarily evident.

Walter Benjamin described a type of experience that, to be complete, requires a subject authorized to narrate it, who must be willing to transmit it, and an audience willing to listen (2008). If these three requirements are not met, the experience is interrupted, since it fails to be transmitted to the collective, remaining only with the person who lived it.

For the person who testifies, there may be necessary silences due to the protection of oneself or others (Halbawchs, 2004), which sometimes wait for the opportune moment to be expressed, as Pollak explains, "the question is not only knowing what, in extreme conditions, makes an individual capable of testifying, but also what makes it necessary to ask for it, or what allows one to feel socially authorized to do so at some point" (2006).

Undoubtedly, the right to silence exists for those who were victims of state terrorism, since memory or the transmission of experience cannot be imposed as a duty on those who survived and live with memories, which in some cases have not been sufficiently processed to be brought into the present.
non-traumatic way.

In the case of the protagonists of this book, they opened up to narrate experiences that they considered relevant to the history of our country, hence their willingness to recount these moments, as well as others from their lives.

Some have tried to do so in the past, but without the possibility of being heard; they hope to find today a social disposition that attends to these experiences, allowing the experience to be complete, that is, transmitted to the whole of society.

Because the ability to narrate is also linked to the willingness to listen, a situation that has encountered difficulties, according to what the women who participate in this book say, hindering the possibility of relating painful issues that not only society, but even families, have refused to hear, perhaps believing that in this way they were protecting them.

Several agreed that although they wanted to talk about what happened to them when they were arrested after the coup, it was not easy to find a listening ear from family or society, which encapsulated the pain and made it difficult to process it.

This difficulty in listening was due, in part, to political will, in contexts where forgetting was advocated as a method of social reconciliation. Jelin points out that “every policy of conservation and memory, by selecting traces to preserve, conserve or commemorate, has implicitly a will to forget” (2011).

Lucía Neira, for example, recounts how she was summoned to testify for the Report of Truth and Reconciliation, known as the Valech Report¹³:

And then, it was my turn to make that statement, and I told him, “I am the woman, well, the widow of Arsenio Poupin.” And the guy said to me, “Ma’am, let’s not do anything else.” I mean, it was like a kind of screening process, to find out... he told me, “Ma’am, no, I think we already know,” because a human rights lawyer at what used to be the INP told me, “You know, Lucía, I’ve been reading your file, and I was really speechless.”

She told me something like that, that it seemed like a horror novel. But my story wasn’t horror, I’m sure of it.

13. The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, better known as the “Valech Commission” (named after Monsignor Sergio Valech, who chaired it), was created in 2003 to clarify the identities of those who suffered imprisonment and torture for political reasons at the hands of state agents or individuals acting on their behalf during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. Testimonies were received, and lists were subsequently compiled of those who qualified as victims in this context. To date, two lists of individuals eligible for inclusion in the “Valech Commission” exist: 1 and 2.

Although the interviewer was surely trying to spare her a difficult moment, Lucía wanted to speak but couldn't. However, as Jelin herself adds, attempts to silence generate resistance and reactions that keep those other interpretations and narratives of the past alive.

Agreeing to tell their stories and making them public in this book is precisely that: A resistance against the imposed silence, the lack of listening in close circles, a society that often insists that, after so many years, it is better to move forward ignoring the past, regardless of the fact that its consequences are evident in the present, and surely in our futures.

4. Gender-based sexual violence and the difficulty of listening

A recurring theme among women who experienced imprisonment was the torture they endured, with the well-known gender-based sexual violence that this entailed, aimed at punishing, degrading, and forcing them back into the role of mandated femininity (Bunster, 1991). This has perhaps been one of the issues on which those who testified have encountered the greatest difficulty in being heard, which is why these accounts emerge only when they have the opportunity to be shared.

These acts of violence, far from being an intimate problem for each victim, are a social issue, since the transgression of these intimacies, as mentioned by the Argentine intellectual Marta Vasallo (2009), has a public character, since "it is committed so that other detainees hear or see, so that it is known in the restricted framework of the clandestine center or the prison and so that it is feared throughout society. Its objectives are specifically political, since it is a form of violence that has been organized by the systematic structure of terror" (Bacci et al.).

Therefore, it is important to stop linking these experiences of abuse solely with offenses against modesty, and to understand their political complexity, an issue that is amplified in the case of women, who have been socialized to feel ashamed and even blame ourselves when we have been sexually violated, as if we had some kind of responsibility for what happened.

These specific forms of mistreatment that sought to dismantle the repressed women were framed within the logic of "counterinsurgency" and the doctrine of "national security" of the repressive apparatus, according to which the women of the opposing side were differentiated between "enemies" or "women of the enemy" (Olavarr

It is necessary to read these tortures as part of a larger network of human rights violations and dictatorial control practices towards the entire society, which systematically used gender specificity to aggravate the torments to which women and men were subjected when they were detained.

This is evidenced by the systematic nature of these expressions of dictatorial repression, by their widespread occurrence and repetition in other dictatorships in the region, and by the scientific approach achieved over the years to accomplish this task.

In the first list of the Political Imprisonment and Torture Report, out of a total of 3,399 interviewees, almost all spontaneously indicated "having been subjected to sexual violence without distinction of age and 316 said they had been raped"¹⁴, concluding that this was widespread mistreatment in the case of women, even though the specific question was never asked.

These forms of violence have a wide spectrum of expressions, and among them are recurring issues that are offensive and brutal beyond rape, such as forced nudity, being ridiculed for their bodies, or having to use the bathroom in front of guards. Nuria Núñez recalls the following:

Up in the coliseum. There's a lot of groping, laughing at your body. Ah! This one doesn't have breasts, so she's no good for anything (...) The torture, more electricity, harsh mistreatment... the threat: we're going to kill you, I'm going to cut your hair, I used to have long hair, we're going to cut your hair, many threats and this, as I say, very sexual, with the sexual threat.

The story clearly demonstrates how seemingly minor and not necessarily sexual issues use gender specificity to torment: I'm going to cut your hair, I don't care how much you cared for it or let it grow, I don't care if you don't want to, because you are at my mercy. Your body belongs to me.

These acts of violence are not limited to obviously sexual matters, focusing on symbolic gender markers that were relevant to them and that – in the context of a camp of confinement and torture – meant increased torment: bodies threatened and exposed defenselessly to the oppressors.

14. National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Valech Commission) (2004). Report. Chapter V. Methods of torture and definitions: sexual violence against women.

On the one hand, forgetting was the necessary strategy for continuing to live, as Jorge Semprún points out after his experience in the concentration camps of World War II, a tool to which every victim is entitled. This is what Nuria Núñez describes as "a relief, a gift," referring to torture in general and what she experienced in the stadium:

The subject was generally never discussed again. When I arrived at the correctional facility, they welcomed me. They told me, "Forget everything," no one else is going to hurt you. The subject was never brought up again (...) it was a relief, a gift. No one wanted to talk about what they had experienced (...) It was all about forgetting, distracting ourselves.

On the other hand, when they felt the need to speak out after these experiences of abuse, social and family listening was not always available, as evidenced by the absence of the question to those interviewed in the Valech Report, when – despite the years that had passed and the fact that the vast majority of women wanted to talk – the question about gender-based sexual violence was not asked.

This occurred from the early years of the repression, according to Roberto Garretón, a human rights lawyer and one of the first to take testimonies from women who had been arrested and imprisoned. He indicated that the question was not asked due to the women's "natural modesty," a reason that masks the difficulty those taking the testimonies had in listening to such harrowing accounts. The jurist concludes that "sexual assaults were not recorded, much less did they give rise to legal proceedings" (Garretón, 2005, 51).

Oriana refers to the difficulty of talking about these extreme experiences, even within one's own family:

I tried to tell my sister that she was right-wing... Well, she's my sister, I love her all the same. One day I tried to tell her why she was my sister, I said: "Iris, I suffered a lot, you've never asked me about everything I went through, I've always wanted to talk to you." "No, Oriana, because if I had been on the other side, "It would have been terrible."

5. "Mom, where are they taking her?"

One of the recurring issues among those who directly experienced the terrorism of State, these are the consequences that the next generation has to bear, on all if he was in his childhood when the events occurred.

This is why the Argentine Team for Psychosocial Work and Research (EATIP), a mental health and human rights institution, mentions that the damage caused by these traumatic experiences was multigenerational, since several generations were affected simultaneously; intergenerational, as conflicts arose between generations; and transgenerational, since the effects of this damage reappear in various ways in subsequent generations (Kordon, 1999).

This notion recognizes that not only were adults affected by repression and life in a dictatorial system, but also the children of that period, and even those born later, in times of democracy, but who carry the trauma and family silence that reveals the damage.

In the case of these testimonies, this is even more evident, since in several cases the sons and daughters were present when they were arrested, and experienced the sudden separations and fear at an early age, adapting to the emergency.

According to Chilean anthropologist Ximena Bunster, one of the harms experienced by women, exacerbated by their conditions and gender roles, is being arrested in front of their children. She points out that – given cultural norms – "(...) when a woman is arrested in her home, the protection and refuge she represents are shattered, as is the control and coherence she maintained in the intimate sphere of her home" (Bunster, 1991, 48).

This emerges in several of the interviews as a relevant theme, for example, when María Garreaud remembers a fellow detainee who was the mother of a little girl, and with whom they all empathized:

(...) what I never forgot was the time a woman, who seemed to be a social worker, left our group because her husband had the bad idea of taking their little girl to the fence, and it was a real drama. The mother was crying, the girl was crying, the father was crying, and in the end, we were all crying.

Lucía remembers how her daughter went to prepare a small bag with basic items when she learned that she was going to be arrested, while the youngest, in disguise, asked her where they were taking her:

I told Loreto, "Pack me a little bag." And she, who knew how to do things so well, took out my red toiletry bag, from my first marriage, and put in a pair of socks, underwear, my lotion, everything. Juan Pablo was playing at the neighbor's house; he had a little boy the same age. When they were taking me out, he heard the noise. They tried to stop him, but he ran out. Four years old and in his fox costume, he said, "Mommy, where are you taking her?"

Oriana recalls how at one point, after her release, her 6-year-old son became aware of her fear in front of a soldier:

(...) I went to drop off my oldest son. And when I saw a soldier, my legs trembled, and I couldn't cross the street, but my son, only six years old, grabbed my hand and said, "Hold on to me, I'll help you cross the street." That was my motivation not to give up. (...) Later, that same boy would teach me a lesson in greatness; he's my oldest. My sister-in-law called from outside Chile and told me to send my oldest to her house, that she could raise and feed him for a while until everything was sorted out. I was talking about this with my mother at night, but he heard it; he wasn't asleep like we thought. The next day he said to us, "Mom, send me to my Aunt Elsa's. I love you very much, I'll never forget you, but if that way you can feed my brother better, do it!" He looked so small, and his feet didn't even touch the floor of the chair he was sitting on. I hugged him and said, "No, we're not going to be separated." If we die, we'll all die together.

The boy heard, can you imagine? He was even able to tell me to send him, that he would never forget me. So I say, can you imagine the marks they have?

The marks they bear clearly show the damage caused by the brutal experience they endured at a young age and with limited resources, despite what these children understood, more than their mothers believed.

The arrests, the time spent separated from their mothers, the reunions with women who were surely not the same as before after the brutal repressions experienced and observed, probably left transgenerational damage, a matter for which the Center for Mental Health and Human Rights of Chile CINTRAS, discusses the term second generation coined for these children, noting that they lived firsthand and directly the consequences of State terrorism (2009).

The effects of state terrorism persist to this day, as we read in testimonies how exile created a distance with children raised abroad, who as adults have chosen to live in the countries where they grew up.

Ximena says about this:

(...) I couldn't bring my son and his family with me. That's something I deeply regret. He was already married; his wife is Italian, and he wasn't going to move because he wanted to be close to his mother, so he stayed there. He still lives with his family in London. Each one with their own destiny! But this is the knife that signifies exile, that breaks families, that breaks your heart, your soul, everything.

As evidenced by the accounts of their descendants, these women have a clear understanding of the pain experienced by those children, and the consequences that state terrorism had for them as well. In their narratives, they recount how they tried to ease this trauma; for example, in the case of Lucía, who had two teenage daughters and a very young son, she sent them stories to be present in some way and explain what was happening.

However, many of those traumas proved insurmountable for those children, and later for young people and adults. This is an issue the State has ignored, assuming that only adults experienced and understood the brutality of the dictatorship. The accounts show that this was not the case, and that entire families were affected.

6. "They couldn't have destroyed me"

Continuing to live after these experiences wasn't easy, and yet all the women featured in this book managed it. Their children, their material needs, and the hope for a better tomorrow gave them the strength to carry on.

Some found new loves, embarked on supporting solidarity with Chile abroad, participated in other political and social causes, studied, took care of their families, learned to live in foreign countries, or to function in their own country which, after the coup, seemed unknown.

The difficulty stemmed not only from lived experience but also from living in a country and/or environment where dictatorial repression was not a topic open to discussion. These were subterranean memories (Pollak, 2006) that were carried for years, even decades, until they were allowed, and permitted, to be expressed in public discourse and in the battles for hegemonic memory. (Illanes, 2002)

Regarding the importance of passing these memories on to new generations, Silvia reflect:

It is important because of what it means for new generations. Unfortunately, we have experiences like the Holocaust, which still have the importance of ensuring that grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and so on, generation after generation, know what happened and that it truly becomes a Never Again.

Despite the difficulties, they rebuilt their lives and lived to tell the tale. Their strategies were varied, and the challenges they faced along the way were diverse. Today, they are supported by their sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters. They are driven by art, a sentiment shared by many: poetry, storytelling. They are also inspired by the friends with whom they shared this experience, and by the new lives they built through hard work.

Oriana says:

I recovered first because my children, my son, took my hand and said, "I'm going to help you" (...) and I was an adult woman, and he was a 6-year-old boy holding me up so I wouldn't fall, it's very symbolic. He was giving me a message. "No," I said, "they can't have broken me, like Condorito said."

One has to draw on inner strength: "They couldn't have destroyed me." Sure, they damaged me psychologically, physically, but they couldn't have damaged my soul.

They may have damaged them, but they didn't destroy them. Proof of that lies in the pages of this book, where their voices emerge—protagonist, powerful, affectionate, and transparent—to tell new generations what this country was like.

Moments of light and darkness, solidarity and pettiness. The difficulties of the journey and how they overcame them.

Today they were able to tell their stories. They were asked about their experiences and lives, and they agreed to answer and put into words what they have been processing for a long time. Their narratives are here, available to be heard. Words to raise the dead and, at the same time, to bring a smile.

Memories of resistance. Women prisoners in dictatorship

Isidora Salinas Urrejola

CHAPTER II

Memories of resistance: Women prisoners in dictatorship¹⁵

(...) we are still underrepresented and we are beginning to die. Several have already passed away and no one will know about them... men leave behind a record of everything they do... records, stories, poetry, they've filmed, they've done this and that, they've reunited, those from Chacabuco, those from Dawson; women don't. We ourselves make ourselves invisible, so it's essential to do this. To recover even the names of all of them, to leave a list that one can continue to fill in (...) so that it remains as hi

Nuria Núñez

1. From what perspective do we view this story?

The history of Chilean women can be traced from what the historian María Angélica Illanes calls an invincible revolution, that is, by focusing on women and their construction as a historical subject, observing the actions of resistance –of various kinds– against the different obstacles that have operated against their emancipatory struggles.

Some characteristics of this history of resistance include the multiplicity and simultaneity of women's struggles, shaping forms of political action that are expressed not only through institutional and party channels, but also in community and interpersonal relationships. This perspective of permanent revolution, therefore, seems appropriate to a historical interpretation of

15. This chapter was written by Isidora Salinas Urrejola, PhD in History, presenting a historical perspective on the women who were detained in the National Stadium. The author reconstructs a fragment of this experience based on information gathered through interviews with seven former prisoners, as well as a review of personal and archival sources, and other relevant literature.

long-term, to observe the history of women from certain axes such as memory and gender constructions. (Illanes, 2012)

Likewise, it brings us closer to a historical interpretation of female citizenships that transcends the struggles to join the representative political system, because when they are historically constructed, they are expressed in the collective articulation of "flexible" networks and social fabrics that are intertwined through a channel different from formal power.

Those fabrics that, from the perspective of a feminist history, are knotted together in their own diverse political expressions, as the Chilean feminist Julieta Kirkwood wrote, in the sense that "every place," whatever it may be, and every group of women, "even if it has not been previously expressed or manifested, is in itself, almost objectively, a political space of women."¹⁶

Along the same lines is the approach of philosopher Hannah Arendt, relevant to the experiences addressed in this book, insofar as they can also be read as an expression of a "power" generated in the encounter that takes place in prison. Thus, for this author, power arises in various ways, but it always occurs when individuals "act together and disappears the moment they disperse."

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This power always has a potential existence; that is, it appears and exists independently of the number of people who come together or the means available to act. For Arendt, however, the only material condition for power to be generated is precisely the "encounter" between individuals, who recognize themselves in what they have in common in that act of union.

This involves two issues that are important for historically addressing the struggles and expressions of female resistance in different eras,

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16. However, these political spaces always constitute a field of manipulation and partisan control, which can be observed in the historical trajectory of left-wing parties, and the invisibility of gender issues pointed out by their fellow activists, by virtue of class emancipation.

17. In Chapter II: "The Public and Private Spheres," the author argues that both spheres in modern society have more in common than is commonly believed; that is, they are interrelated. The private sphere is generally characterized as a space where individuals distinguish themselves, that is, they are characterized by what makes them different. The public sphere, on the other hand, is characterized by showcasing everything that individuals have in common (Arendt 1998, 223).

groups and conditions, which remained invisible for a long time, not only in traditional historiography, but also in the historiography on "the oppressed".

On the one hand, it involves recognizing women as a collective historical subject, which we can identify in the trajectory of their associative experiences and movements in different periods.

This means that women are part of a shared history because the impact of women's political and organizational actions in the past extends and has repercussions into the present. The history of their struggles, achievements, forms of association, and resistance allows us to outline a historical process spanning more than a century, from which we can recognize a collective memory.

This allows us to consider that the use we can make of that historical memory, that of those past experiences, can be advantageous for asking ourselves, for example, what content from those experiences we can recognize in the struggles of the present.

On the other hand, putting into circulation and "activating" the memories associated with the collective experiences of women requires investigating areas and experiences that are somewhat absent in gender historiography, such as those corresponding to the recent past that this book recovers, incorporating the experience of detention and imprisonment as a new dimension of the historicity of women that is in the process of being reconstructed.

We consider it relevant to make visible the experiences of prisoners in the National Stadium –between September and November 1973–, as this work takes on a pedagogical meaning when strategies and policies associated with the current requirements of an education in citizenship and human rights are demanded.

In the field of historical analysis of gender relations and the various perspectives on them, it is possible to distinguish a consensus that the ways in which gender relations have been constructed have served as a basis for the development of a distinctly feminine reflection, in different periods and

social contexts, as well as the fact that the broad nature of this reflection has been defined by the heterogeneity of women's realities and organizations¹⁸.

This perspective calls into question the historiographical view that groups the different experiences of women's organizations into a single feminist trajectory, which is expressed in a historical interpretation that homogenizes women's political culture, preventing the recognition and/or delimitation of the different identities and movements.

At the same time, it distances itself from generalizing interpretations of women's history, to focus on the trajectory of diverse female identities, which can be historicized in specific terms.¹⁹

From this point, our proposal begins, aiming to characterize these experiences of women political prisoners from their gender and memory dimensions, as they unfold in different spheres and draw upon individual experiences that gradually converge into spaces of collective action. First, inside the locker rooms of the National Stadium (1973), and then in the El Buen Pastor women's correctional facility in Santiago (1973-1975), run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd.

The testimonies compiled in this book answer questions about the ways and worlds of life of the testimonies before the coup d'état, and after the end of the dictatorship, assuming that the detention was an experience that forever transformed their ways of interpreting and positioning themselves in reality.

From this perspective, detention can be interpreted as an experience of association and the building of solidarity within the prison, understood as the "genetic matrix" of that history. This is because life itself was resolved and managed within those relationships and spaces, also incorporating the trajectory of those individuals.

.....
¹⁸. The category of gender refers to the general idea that relations between the sexes are socially constructed. However, as historian Joan Scott argues, gender must cease to be a concept associated with what is "related" to women, in order to work on its analytical potential, question and transform existing historical paradigms by crossing it with other categories and realities (Scott, 1996).

¹⁹. This is a history that proposes to overcome views in which internal differences within societies are reduced to singular forms that correspond to a vision and a value system representative of a civilizational type, generally corresponding to the views of power groups. That is, it questions and problematizes the notion of a single principle or "form as a whole" for the work of historical interpretation, in order to advocate for a way of doing history that unfolds in what Michel Foucault has called "the space of a dispersion" (2003, 15-16).

links and networks once the women were released, transcending the singular and shared experience of prison.

2. Female models under tension

The Latin American dictatorships of the 1960s and 1970s were based on theoretical and doctrinal positions characteristic of the Cold War era, which were expressed in the field of international relations, but also in the field of internal politics based on the National Security Doctrine 20

This doctrine, which became the official thesis of dictatorial armies and governments, had as its central element the proposal of a war against Marxism to ensure the survival of capitalist states and liberal democracies. Its ideological significance was expressed in the idea that Marxism was “an intrinsically perverse doctrine, which means that everything that springs from it is corroded by the poison that corrodes its root (...)”²¹.

This perspective served as justification for the coups d'état first, and then for the processes of national restoration, becoming the apology for an internal war against communism that sustained, on the one hand, the very existence of the military regime and its duration in power and, on the other hand, the approval of broad sectors of Chilean society to its social order.

This doctrine also extended to the realm of behavioral patterns and roles of the various actors in the "restoration" process inaugurated with the coup d'état, resulting in a diverse social component that supported the 1973 military coup. This may explain the reaction against the Popular Unity government that had been developing prior to Salvador Allende's victory, and It transcended the interests of a class sector.

What this diversity of sectors had in common was their identification with a worldview consistent with a national culture that felt threatened.

20. “(...) the original tenets of this theory were formulated at the National War College, the highest military studies institute in the United States. At this center, from the beginning of the forties, based on the concepts and proposals of the most important American geopolitical theorist, Nicholas Spykman, the central points of this doctrine were developed (...)” (Maira 1986, 28)

21. Presidential message from Augusto Pinochet, September 11, 1976.

with the emergence of Marxism. Moreover, these reactionary sectors did not even perceive the differences that existed within the political forces of Popular Unity, generating a social radicalism that reacted as a bloc and expressed itself in subjective mechanisms such as hatred and fear towards communism.

Regarding this, Elizabeth Lira and María Isabel Castillo (1991) point out that within the framework of the terror campaigns deployed in the 1964 elections and then in 1970, the idea was transmitted that the advent of a foreign identity such as communism constituted a serious threat to national identity and culture, thereby producing the generation of a permanent feeling of insecurity and fear, which could be real or imagined.

Thus, the experience of the Popular Unity government constituted for the coup sectors the threat of the displacement of the hegemony of a traditional order, towards a change in the administration of political power and the development model, "which in political terms is equivalent to the disintegration of a hegemony, thereby abruptly altering the perception of possibilities, the strongest constant of the social imaginary" (Brunner, 1990, 87).

The truth was that the dictatorship regime in Chile revitalized a form of authoritarianism that was not only sustained by domination through force, but also "brutally and successfully undermined all the underlying authoritarianism in civil society" (Kirwood, 1983, 4).

This helps explain, for example, why women, in particular, were the target of discourses and policies aimed at reinforcing feminine models oriented toward social conservatism. The policies implemented by the civic-military dictatorship toward "women" were marked by a traditional conception of gender roles consistent with the sociocultural project established under the dictatorship.

Throughout the dictatorial period (1973-1990) Pinochetism decisively promoted the creation of women's organizations which, in the case of the popular sectors, guided their return to the domestic world under the umbrella of the organizational action of a female volunteer, made up primarily of wives of civil and military authorities committed to the dictatorship in Chile.

Women became a strategic actor in carrying out the restoration project of the military government, once it was in power, mainly due to the organizational capacity they demonstrated when they formed a women's movement opposed to the government of Salvador Allende.

The dictatorship knew how to capitalize on the memory of that movement, and gave due importance to the role of "women" in safeguarding the nation. This role, which had been represented in the "marches of empty pots," where women clamored for a return to order and their place in society, later served the dictatorship to reaffirm precisely a model of womanhood characterized by the excellence of her attributes linked to biological and moral reproduction.²²

From the beginning of his stay in power, Pinochet, supported by his wife Lucía Hiriart, made known his conviction about the historical task of "women" in what these sectors called the "military pronouncement" of 1973.

The content of the speech suggested that the Popular Unity government constituted a moment in the historical course of Chile in which "women" were violated in their essence, which is why they actively entered into history to transform it.

According to this discourse, the woman, like other actors in the nation, had to rebel against the chaos, fight the Marxist government, bring about the military pronouncement, and call on the Armed Forces to save the Fatherland (Mattelart, 1997, 44).

In addition, the female component transcended the limits of the upper and middle classes, integrating women from other sectors and conditions, expanding the support base of this movement led by wealthy women.

This explains, based on the arguments put forth by the French scholar Michelle Mattelart in her book on this movement, why "bourgeois women" have resorted to the strategy of proletarianizing their demands in order to gain the support of other social sectors, and thus give a broad and multi-class character to their cause.

motion.

This was reflected in a call for the last mass demonstration of the right wing, eight days before the military coup, in which women had a leading role.

22. The first mass demonstration of the right during the Popular Unity government featured women as protagonists; it was the so-called "empty pots" march that took place on December 1, 1971. This mobilization was organized by the Democratic Women's Front, which brought together the female contingent of the National and Christian Democratic Parties, and marked the beginning of a series of demonstrations that would be repeated at a regular pace (Mattelart 1997, 177).

This text reflects the broad appeal made by right-wing women to the female population, alluding not only to social position but also to their roles as mothers, wives, and homemakers:

Chilean woman: Mr. Allende does not deserve to be president of the Republic. Mr. Allende has led the country to catastrophe. We have no bread for our children! We have no medicine for our sick! We have no clothes to keep us warm! We have no roof over our heads! We have been harassed and persecuted for defending our children, for showing solidarity with our husbands on strike, for taking to the streets to shake the dormant conscience of so many men. We call upon women to make a commitment of honor!

Wednesday, September 5, at 5:00 p.m. (Mattelart, 1997, 182)23 .

Shortly after the coup, the ideological discourse toward “women” was quite clear and explicit in stating that they, like the armed forces, were understood essentially as spirit and not as body; that is, connected to and belonging to a world of values, not needs, within which they should shape their life project. In this sense, the discourse of the military regime linked “women” to the armed forces and assigned them the role of gestating, maintaining, and projecting the so-called “great Chilean family” (Munizaga, 1998, 30), a point evidenced in the following discourse:

I pay homage to Chilean mothers, women inspired by that divine clarity that God holds in their hearts; they fought for the future of their children, and for this History will recognize them in time, when the sad pages of this past are studied.24

Thus, Pinochet's speeches frequently addressed women, whom he praised for having raised the alarm about the risks under Salvador Allende's government. Furthermore, he attributed great importance to women in transmitting values to young people within the framework of national reconstruction, stating:

23. This last demonstration was called by women transport workers, women from the paper mill, peasant women, residents, students, merchants, secretaries, nurses, social workers, housewives, professional women and union members. These groups converged in the Democratic Women's Front, in Female Power (female branch of Fatherland and Liberty) and FRENDUC (Housewives' Front).

24. Augusto Pinochet as President of the Governing Junta, October 11, 1973 (Donoso 1974, 124).

Because the unknown Chilean woman never stopped going out into the streets, her pots and pans a menacing sight in those now-virile hands... That is why Chile opened a unique path for the world: this scrawny, poor country—this country we all thought defenseless—deserved the honor of—with its own strength (...) with the pots and pans of its women and the courage of its soldiers—deserved the honor of twisting the arm of communism (...) humble and beloved homeland. Homeland recovered (...) There are your mothers. They will continue to take care of you.²⁵

From a gender perspective, it is possible to interpret that official sectors deployed a discourse that, according to the Chilean sociologist María Elena Valenzuela, symbolically associated politics with masculinity, assigning women, along with the armed forces, the role of moral reserve of the nation, defining them as a “natural ally” of the government essentially due to their “apolitical” nature (Valenzuela, 1990, 212). This openly discouraged their incorporation into the activities of the public sphere and repositioned them in their social role of transmitting values within the family.²⁶ This is reflected in one of Pinochet's speeches:

Chile needs and appreciates the technical contribution of its female professionals and values the scope of their brilliant capacity; but it does not underestimate the anonymous work of the women who work in the silent laboratory of the home, watching over the most precious capital of the nation: their children, future hope of the Fatherland (Rojas, 1989, 181).

The female image was thus presented as pure essence and virtue, and the model of woman had defined characteristics and attributes that Pinochet himself took care to describe in the following way:

[...] intuition, energy, patriotism, courage, pride, dignity, a firm sense of reality, resistance to unrealistic adventures, faith,

25. Augusto Pinochet as President of the Governing Junta, October 11, 1973 (Donoso 1974, 150).

26. However, this policy was deployed in the midst of a context of authoritarianism and economic crisis, which, contrary to the assigned gender roles, pushed women – fundamentally popular – to integrate into the practices related to the requirements of a social reorganization.

fervor, enthusiasm, civic maturity, love of God, love of country, strength, wealth of intuition, affective richness, vocation of service, generosity, divine clarity that God harbors in their hearts, Spartan heart (Rojas, 1989, 181).

Clearly, these essential values and virtues clashed head-on with the representations that the coup sectors constructed about left-wing and revolutionary militant women, who symbolized values opposed to the traditional model of woman supported in Pinochet's public speeches.

The characteristics of the "leftists" made the women who went through torture the target of specific forms of violence and repression, which were justified by the need to return to the traditional order promoted by the right-wing coup sectors.

The situation of the women who were victims of detention and torture was described as follows in the report prepared by the Democratic Federation International Women's Day in 1974:

Thousands upon thousands of women have been tortured and detained in Chile; in the Santiago Women's Prison there are 96 detainees. Many of them are doctors, teachers, lawyers. A large number of the prisoners are minors. They are not allowed to be visited and are designated as prisoners of war. Naturally, this is the war that the fascist Junta has declared against the people of Chile (9).

One of these specific forms of violence was generic sexual violence in torture, which has been recognized in various treaties and studies as a brutal expression of violence exercised in dictatorial contexts.

In the case of Chile, and according to a study, psychologist Carolina Carrera mentions that two types of women victims of torture can be identified: On the one hand, women militants or collaborators of a political party or group "who were demonized in the discourse of the dictatorship, while this condition was the axis around which sexual violence against them was articulated" (2005, 58-62). And, on the other hand, those who had ties and relationships (family and/or partner) with active political militants, in whom the gendered nature of their torture was more evident, because they were arrested based on their interpersonal relationships with male militants, and were seen as objects of "property" or extensions of the wanted man, reaffirming their subordinate status. Their sexuality, in

In this case, she was considered as “possession of “others” (children, parents, spouses), being manipulated as an instrument to morally and socially harm these others, who should protect her.

The truth is that this dichotomy becomes very blurred when reviewing the testimonies of militant and non-militant women, firstly because –especially in this first period– many were accused of things they didn’t even know about, and at the same time the militants were constantly punished as “whores” as women of the enemy-man whom they recognized as the true adversaries.

From this point of view, the feminist sociologist Ximena Bunster, in the eighties, highlighted the idea that torture against prisoners had a specific relationship with its character as sexual violence, in addition to the gender ideas and patterns promoted by the military dictatorships.

The military regimes of the Southern Cone constructed specific punishment guidelines aimed at all women militants of the left or suspected of being so.

These women threatened a feminine model linked to a natural order consistent with their mission in the homeland and family; their subversive character represented a threat to the maintenance of that order, and therefore they deserved to be punished (Maravall, 2007, 113-125).

From this, Bunster revealed the close links between the forms and mechanisms of sexual torture directed towards women with the culture of patriarchal roots, configuring themselves in practice as forms of sexual slavery.

The women’s accounts speak, for example, of the sexist and cruel language of the torturers, who referred to them as “whores”—especially when it was the partner of some wanted leftist—or in the numerous cases in which they were raped individually or collectively, as a form of punishment for not conforming to the gender order that placed them inside the home, being a good wife and mother.²⁷

.....
27. Of particular gravity was the fact that the repressive apparatus exercised sexual torture against young, non-militant minors who were detained in the National Stadium and other detention centers, without discrimination of any kind; they were tortured, generally, to obtain information about their parents. See: Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Report.

The presence of non-militant adolescents in detention and torture centers generally reflected the image of women as an extension of men, which involved daughters or sisters of the persecuted person:

The honor of women

To live up to their fascist nature, the Chilean Military Junta did not
He has hesitated to attack the honor of women. The accounts are overwhelming.
According to a testimony from Chile, in January the daughter of the communist
deputy, (...), 16 years old, was arrested.
The intention was to hold her hostage so that her father would surrender.
The young girl was brutally raped by a group of Black Beret marines. According
to this testimony, her breasts were torn and bitten. The shock this little girl
suffered still leaves her in terrible health (Women's International Democratic
Federation, 1974, 9).

Another form of violence recorded in the testimonies of the women who testified about young
minors –detained for their affiliation with members of leftist organizations– was psychological
torture associated with generic sexual violence, as Cecilia Riveros recounts:

This girl was 16 years old (...). She was arrested because her brother was
arrested; she went with him. Who was going to believe her story? We were.
The thing is, they arrested her because they were together. I was 33 years old;
she was like a daughter to me (...) this little girl was so loving. Among the things
they did to her, they didn't hit her. She told us, when the interrogations started,
that they would strip her naked, then blindfold her, put her in something like a
coffin, and she couldn't see because she was blindfolded. I mean, what she
went through was psychological... a 16-year-old girl, for her there must have
been

has been terribly intimidating.

Torture of women was a practice that cut across social classes and ages; however, testimonies
reveal exceptions of detainees who did not receive this type of mistreatment. This included
some cases of women of "respectable" standing who were not necessarily raped, although they
experienced other forms of sexual coercion. At the same time, other women

linked to members of the political hierarchy if they were cruelly tortured in these terms.

Addressing these forms of gender-based sexual violence perpetrated by the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship has been a complex issue for society and survivors to grapple with. In the field of Human Rights, it was the data from the Valech Commission report (291)²⁸ that—despite not including all women who suffered torture and not directly asking about this type of abuse—provided “the first official recognition of sexual torture as a specific form of repression in Chile” (Maravall, 2007, 113-125).

3. Women in prison: spaces, dynamics and links in the seclusion

3.1 National Stadium (September-November 1973)

The National Stadium was the largest detention and torture center in the country and began operating, like other facilities, on the same day the earthquake struck.

The coup d'état on September 11, 1973, lasted until November of that year. same year.²⁹

During its two months of operation, it was under the control of the Army, under the orders of Colonel Jorge Espinoza Ulloa, who at that time served as Department Head in the Army Personnel Directorate.³⁰

.....
28. Report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, Chapter V Methods of Torture and Definitions: Sexual Violence Against Women. In its first phase, this Commission received testimony from 3,399 women, representing 12.5% of those who testified. More than half of them were detained during 1973. Almost all reported having been subjected to sexual violence, regardless of age, and 316 reported having been raped. However, it is estimated that the number of women raped is much higher than the cases spontaneously reported, because there are numerous testimonies from detainees who reported witnessing rapes committed in a large number of detention centers.

29. In the particular case of the National Stadium, it was designated as a detention center by the Military Junta through Decree No. 4 of September 11, 1973, in which the designation of an army general as Zone Chief in a state of emergency for the province of Santiago was established.

30. Pascale Bonnefoy presents a profile of Colonel Espinoza in her book, defining him as a “naked neck, as the more prepared officers contemptuously called those who only had the insignia of their unit on the neck of their uniform, and not the laurel that surrounds it when one is a Staff Officer, nor the palm and sword that identified him as a Polytechnic Engineer” (2016, 25).

One of the characteristics of this facility was that its organization followed an "indiscriminate" criterion of detaining people, typical of the period from September to December 1973, which according to the first list of the Valech Report concentrated 52% of the detentions of women during the dictatorship, with a total of 1,147 cases registered in this document.

A report submitted to the United Nations by the International Federation of Democratic Women (FIMD) in 1974, reported on the human rights situation in Chile, especially regarding torture, and reproduced in one of its parts the account of a woman of Colombian nationality, who had been detained in this place:

I had all my papers in order. I traveled to Chile at the invitation of the Latin American Episcopal Conference. I was arrested as I was arriving home. I was taken to the National Stadium. Upon entering, I saw two trucks leaving, and an officer said they were carrying last night's shipment. All day and night, people were lying on the pavement with their legs spread. The women were searched by soldiers, who took the opportunity to grope them.

In the cell I saw a Yugoslavian woman who was having an abortion. She had been arrested at the airport and hadn't eaten for three days. They gave her Aspirin and Valium. I saw seven other pregnant women who weren't treated any better. Among the women was a doctor who was allowed to treat the prisoners, but after a few days she was isolated and accused of practicing medicine illegally (1974, 9).

Likewise, the accounts that speak about the arrival of the detainees at the Stadium indicate that there was a general lack of administrative order and information regarding the people who were being admitted, and that the questions that the military asked in the first interrogations revealed the lack of knowledge about the situation and political activity of the people being questioned.

An example of this is the following account by María Garreaud, a witness in this book and one of the prisoners transferred from the LAN Chile offices in Cerrillos to the National Stadium along with about a hundred other people from the same company:

They took us off the plane in single file and searched our clothes and bodies just like in the movies. They checked us. They returned our IDs and left us to be interrogated. There were hundreds of people like us. The interrogations involved punches, kicks, and verbal abuse. Terror had already taken hold of us. There were more than 100 of us from LAN; we couldn't talk to anyone. There were lines to get to a window where they took our information and asked us questions. Who did you vote for in the elections? What channel do you watch on TV? Where do you buy bread if there are shortages of everything? While we waited, some soldiers walked around and told us, "Report everything you know so they don't beat you, and you can go home."

From the present, for some former prisoners, this lack of accurate information from the military about the detainees was a factor that allowed them to survive that experience.

Several of them, realizing that their interrogators were unaware of their political activity, even pretended not to know why they had been arrested, as a form of self-protection, as Ximena George recounts.

Birth:

The thing is, at the beginning, the soldiers didn't have much experience either. They didn't really know how to ask questions, how to torture, how to record things. In fact, on many occasions, they didn't even know the political standing of the people they were interrogating. In that sense, we were lucky to be caught during that period, because for those who were caught later, it was horrifying. They

Regarding the number of people who were detained in this facility, there are no exact records, but there are several sources that provide some approximations.

In the case of international organizations that conducted visits during the period of detention, the data varies mainly because the Army took care to hide what was happening, minimizing the number of people detained and providing false information about the conditions in which they were found.

The International Committee of the Red Cross, which conducted two humanitarian visits to the stadium, noted that in September there were approximately 7,000 people detained, of whom 200 to 300 were of other nationalities.³¹

For its part, the Organization of American States (OAS), which sent a representative to verify the situation on the ground, reported that by October there were 2,603 people, among whom 173 were women.³² In the same month of October, it is recorded that *Ercilla Magazine* reported that inside the National Stadium there were about five thousand people detained.

Other data that have been a source of controversy are the lists published by Manuel Contreras (2000), which indicate a total of nine thousand people arrested, counting 506 women, among whom 64 were foreigners, although the testimonies of people arrested suggest that the total number of people who were in the Stadium could be double.

Similarly, the Valech Report recorded a total of 41 people murdered in this compound, although witnesses indicated having heard many executions that were not recorded.³³

Testimonies and documents record the entry of militants from left-wing parties into this detention center, but also of those who had nothing to do with them, even including people who sympathized with right-wing sectors and parties, and therefore were in favor of the coup.

The characteristics of the women who were imprisoned there were diverse, and they responded to different cultural, political, national, age, and class contexts.

31. Summary Report on the ICRC's Humanitarian Action in Chile (20.09-18.11.1973), International Committee of the Red Cross, Genoa, 1973. This Committee obtained permission to carry out humanitarian action in Chile between September 20 and November 18, 1973. This action was led by Eddi Leemann, who, during his first visit to the National Stadium, counted 7,691 detainees, while on his second visit, he counted 1,536. In the aforementioned report, Leemann noted that detention conditions varied in each place of confinement, but in general, they were sufficient in the north of the country, fair with only one exception in the center, and insufficient in the south. They were unacceptable in the Temuco Prison and on the prison ship LEBU.

32. Between October 12 and 17, the Executive Secretary of the IACHR, Dr. Luis Reque, was authorized by the Chilean authorities to enter the detention center and verify the situation of the prisoners on-site. For more information about this visit, please see the following link: <https://www.cidh.oas.org/annualrep/74sp/Chile.htm>

33. Estimates of the number of prisoners who passed through the Stadium vary; they range from about 2,000 to 20,000 people.

and gender, among others. The conditions of their detention were also varied: some were arrested at their workplaces, others in public, while in hiding or during raids, and quite a few were arrested for being in the wrong place without having anything to do with partisan or union matters, as Ximena recounts:

I think most, though not overwhelmingly, of the women arrested were politically engaged. They had a pretty good understanding of the situation; they were involved in something, they were left-wing.

However, there were also some comrades who didn't. There were some very young girls and others who were more like country folk, who didn't really understand the political context of why they were there. They understood that they had been arrested by the military, but they didn't understand the historical and political reasons why these things happen. (...) Luckily, most of them left quickly, because it was probably true that they had nothing to do with it. Only the most committed remained.

Silvia also has the impression that the prisoners had no political connection other than having joined the Popular Unity campaign, and were even children, a matter she relates in the following way:

(...) there were others who were younger, I mean little girls of 16 years old who worked in factories and they were taken there, and they are the ones who admitted to being from the Popular Unity, admitted that they liked to tag... and they were beaten hard because they thought that they knew a lot and that they didn't want to talk and the problem was that the poor things didn't know anything.

Testimonies indicate that many women arrived at the Stadium from other detention centers, such as police stations, investigation headquarters, the Ministry of Defense, Cerro Chena – as in the case of a group of teachers from Buin –, the Telecommunications Regiment, among other places that were the sites of the first arrests immediately after the bombing of La Moneda.

Another characteristic of this detention center was that it was used as a "transit" place or, as journalist Pascale Bonnefoy points out, a "filter" for detainees who were later transferred to other prisons or destinations of exile.

Several women testified about how people were taken from the stadium to other torture centers and then returned in poor physical condition. At the same time, the stadium itself was used as a torture center, with specific interrogation rooms set up inside where systematic mistreatment and abuse were inflicted—unimaginable to those who lived through these experiences.

One of these first places mentioned is the area of the presidential tribune, where the sports press was located, and which was called the "presidential balcony". This place was used as an interrogation room without gender discrimination, and the facility's administration offices were also located there. The women remember this press room as a space where they were subjected to various types of torture, including gender-based torture, as Dr. Elena Gálvez recounts:

I was tortured in the presidential box, in the stadium, up there, and I have the impression that it was relatively short, but there were people, comrades who were outside, and they tell me that it wasn't short, that it was very long, and I had the feeling that I didn't scream, but my comrades say that I did scream, and that's when they applied electric shocks to me, in different parts of my body. I don't have a memory of how long it lasted; time completely changes my percepti

The various texts that recount these experiences also identify the path that led from the coliseum to the velodrome, traveled by the people who were going to be interrogated, who were covered with blankets as they advanced in a line holding each other by the shoulder.

At the velodrome they had to wait to be called for interrogation, which took place inside the "shells," where various forms of torture were applied, such as the "electric grill" or hangings.

.....
34. Interview with Dr. Laura Gálvez, featured in the documentary *Estadio Nacional* by Carmen Luz Parot, minute 41:40. Dr. Gálvez has been mentioned by most of the women in the various published testimonies we have researched, in addition to the women who gave testimonies in this book. For this reason, we conducted an interview with her daughter to learn more about her, in which we were able to delve into her time at the stadium and at the w
Due to their importance, we have added a specific section to the project website about some women whose testimonies we were unable to obtain for various reasons, with the aim of learning about them through the accounts of their fellow inmates. This is the case of Dr. Gálvez and other women who left a profound mark on this history.

The main detention area was the Colosseum, which had twenty-eight dressing rooms, eight hatches, as well as the "presidential balcony," all of these spaces were used as places of detention and torture.

According to testimonies, during the first few days there were women detained in the dressing rooms and hatches of the coliseum, as well as in the stands during the first few days, although separated from the men with whom they could only be seen from a distance (Bonnefoy, 2016).³⁵

The Olympic swimming pool area and the two changing rooms located in the north and south sections were the places where the women spent their confinement. According to the testimonies collected, during the first two weeks they remained inside the coliseum, but on September 26 they were transferred to the swimming pool area (Bonnefoy, 2016)³⁶.

They spent their days there, relying on solidarity and camaraderie, but also experiencing a feeling of distrust towards "strangers" or some women who had approaches to the military or collaborated with them by supporting the administrative tasks of the detention center, as Ximena recounts:

35. For more information about the National Stadium as a place of detention, as well as descriptions of the different areas of the complex and the experiences lived there, Carmen Luz Parot's documentary, titled National Stadium, is illustrative. There is also autobiographical literature—mainly written by men—such as Adolfo Cozzi's testimonial chronicle, National Stadium, and Jorge Montealegre's Blankets of the National Stadium, and Pascale Bonnefoy's investigative journalism book, Stadium Terrorism: Prisoners of War in a Sports Field, which includes a chapter on the place where the women were detained: the swimming pool. Another important reference that compiles the experiences of male and female prisoners is Wally Kunstmann and Victoria Torres's book, One Hundred Voices Break the Silence. Testimonies of former political prisoners of the military dictatorship in Chile (1973-1990), published by the Directorate of Libraries, Archives and Museums, 2008. It is also important to mention the work carried out by the National Stadium Corporation, National Memory, which inaugurated the first memorial located on Avenida Grecia in 2014. Since then, this group has been dedicated to rescuing the historical memory of what happened in this detention center, through the conservation of the memorial site, as well as the generation of educational projects on human rights and cultural activities that include permanent guided tours.

36. The interviewees in the text we present do not remember exactly the dates of these transfers inside the Stadium, nor do they accurately remember the dates of the events that occurred both in the National Stadium and in the Women's Correctional Facility while they were detained.

There was also a huge amount of mistrust there. You didn't know who was who. You only trusted your own people, the people you knew. You had no idea who anyone else was. You made friends, but only superficially. You didn't tell them anything at all.

Daily life for the women in this prison was confined to the area surrounding the swimming pool, which included the north and south changing rooms, as well as the paved area at the entrance to the changing rooms and part of the zone between the pool and Pedro de Valdivia Avenue. This area had grass and vegetation, and the women remained there during the day, able to move around and walk, sitting on the grass or on benches located there.

The prisoners could come and go from the north dressing room with relative ease during the day, taking advantage of the space to have conversations or spend time trying to cope together with what they were experiencing.

Towards the south end of the pool, there was a space separating it from the other changing room, where there were also many women. According to testimonies, the soldiers did not allow the women from either changing room to talk or interact, as Ximena recalls: "So, there was no contact between one changing room and the other. It might happen by chance, but no, it didn't."

In both dressing rooms the prisoners remained locked up under guard at night, with various accounts estimating that the number inside the north dressing room exceeded one hundred women.

This number fluctuated due to the daily flow of prisoners entering and leaving, as well as the movement of prisoners between the north and south dressing rooms, a classification that apparently did not follow a clear selection or order criterion, except for some mentions such as that of Oriana, who indicates that: "once interrogated, they were moved from the north dressing room to the south dressing room"

Two days after being locked up, those of us who had already been interrogated were moved to different dressing rooms."

Accounts from prisoners who were held in the north dressing room describe the conditions in which they spent the nights: they slept crowded together, taking turns sleeping sitting, standing, lying down, giving preference of space to pregnant women or those mistreated by torture, who were given support and care while they recovered.

In this space, they shared two mattresses between several of them to sleep, although there must not have been enough for everyone, since Nuria says that they slept: "on the tile, and we shared what we had to cover ourselves, because it was cold, (...) besides, that thing was made of cement, concrete."

Maria recalls the daily life in the north dressing room:

The days passed slowly. Every day, when I woke up and stared at the ceiling, I was confronted with the grim reality of being imprisoned in that place without explanation or reason, only with the fear of not knowing what the day would bring. Around eight in the morning, after queuing to use the bathroom, I had to take a quick shower with ice-cold water and do minimal washing before putting on the same clothes. One day I wore panties, the next day briefs, so I could wash one item of clothing a day, but some of my fellow inmates had nothing left. There were some doctors who had been taken from Barros Luco Hospital in their work aprons; they were freezing. There was even a pregnant midwife who, poor thing, slept on the floor.

Another dimension of the women's experience in the stadium's locker rooms was expressed in the generic sexual torture not only in obvious matters such as rape or groping, but also in the constant harassment that many had to face daily, even experiencing persecution and offers of benefits from some military personnel, as Oriana recounts:

(...) I was taking a shower in a small stall with a tin door that only covered the midsection of your body, leaving your legs and head exposed from the knees down. You could see from the entrance stairs; you could see the person showering there. It was perfectly visible. I heard footsteps that stopped halfway up the stairs. It was a young soldier who, with a malicious smile, asked me, "Do you need help?" I pressed myself against the door, trembling with fear, because I was alone in the bathroom at that moment, and my clothes were on top of me in a sink outside the shower so they wouldn't get wet. But I mustered the strength to answer him, "No, I am a prisoner of war, and according to the Geneva Convention, I deserve respect." This was like a stop sign; my

My companions. That's how it was, and my jailer turned around, quite annoyed. Later he would try to find me near the pool, but thank God I would get out of there soon. He didn't manage to find me, but he kept trying. It was like they chose the one they liked best, then they tried to insist with things, or by bringing you things.

Testimonies indicate that the closure of this detention camp was an expected event, especially because a commission from the Federation

International Football Association (FIFA) officials visited the stadium in October to verify the conditions of the venue on site and ensure the guarantees offered by the Board.

Military personnel for the organization of a football match between Chile and the Soviet Union, qualifier for the World Cup in Germany.

During that visit, many prisoners were confined to the locker rooms to prevent the FIFA delegation from seeing the large number of people being held inside the stadium. The delegates reported that the venue met the necessary conditions to hold the match without incident.

Ximena recounts this moment as follows:

It was pretty clear that they weren't going to keep us at the Stadium forever and that something was going to happen. There were always rumors that they were taking us to this place or that place. At one point, people thought they were going to take all of us to Chacabuco, but no, it was the men they were going to move there. We were transferred, more or less, when the soccer match was coming up; about 10 days before, they took a group of women to the correctional facility. They had set up a small shed to receive them. That's when we realized they were going to end up taking all of us. And, in fact, later they moved us to the big shed, which was ready when they had to vacate the Stadium.³⁷

37. The aforementioned football match was the one scheduled between Chile and the Soviet Union for the 1974 World Cup qualifiers, to be played on November 21, 1973, at the National Stadium Coliseum. Despite Pinochet having transformed the stadium into a detention and torture center, FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) authorized the match. The Soviets did not appear in protest, and FIFA ordered the Chilean team to take the field. The Chilean team had to line up in front of the opposing team's empty goal and score a goal that has gone down in sports history as the "victory of shame." More information about this can be found in Carmen Luz Parot's documentary, *Estadio Nacional*.

The women were taken from the dressing rooms in two operations that carried out the transfer to the El Buen Pastor women's correctional prison in Santiago. One transfer took place during the day and the second at night. In both operations, a significant number of women were also freed, most of whom went home to reunite with their families.

The women were released during the day, which facilitated their transfer to the different neighborhoods of Santiago where they lived. Some were rearrested a few hours later and had to be taken to other torture centers before finally arriving at the El Buen Pastor correctional facility to reunite with their cellmates. Oriana, who was released on this occasion, recounts the moment as follows:

The day of leaving that hell arrived. I was in the middle of the stadium field (...). All of us who were leaving were lined up, while our comrades remained, singing: "Free, I am free, free as the sea, I am free, as the sea." (...) They called our names, and we all took a step forward, filled with hope. They made us sign a departure list, but they told us that anyone who couldn't get home could spend the night there.

I thought: after signing the release form, what guarantees our safety? And even though there was only an hour left until curfew—because back then the curfew was quite early, I don't remember if it was 6 or 7, I don't know—I decided to run through the streets to my house.

Other women asked me for help and ran with me.

We did it with shoes on, then just with socks; we thought we'd do it faster that way. We ran and ran and ran, from the stadium to the California Theater, because the point was not to get caught in the street. Because they could arrest us.

According to the testimonies of the women who remained in the last group of prisoners because they were not released, the number inside the north dressing room reached thirty women, who were taken out around three in the morning, shouting at the top of their lungs. Once outside, they were lined up and their names were taken, to begin the operation that would take them to the correctional facility, as Nuria recalls:

(...) and you're like, wow! Everything was happening in the stadium, I mean... you didn't know if you were going to be alive in the next few hours, and they started calling our names, so we had to step forward,

So they lined us up there, imagine!... and so we were a large group, I'd say no less than thirty, there was everything... there wasn't even a criterion.

3.2 The Good Shepherd Women's Correctional Facility in Santiago (1973-1975)³⁸

The inclusion of the women's correctional facility experience in this study was due to the fact that we found that some of those who were detained in the National Stadium, once it closed its facilities as a prison camp, were transferred to this jail run by the Good Shepherd nuns at the end of November.

In this place, the confinement was characterized by showing a different experience than that of the Stadium, a place where the conditions did not allow the generation of permanent bonds of trust that did occur in the correctional facility.

This second facility was mostly filled with women who had not yet been sentenced, since – according to testimonies– the legal processes began later, which is explained by the period in which these imprisonments occurred. when the year 1973 was not yet over.

From this perspective, the correctional facility can also be defined as a place of transit for many women; however, some had to stay for a longer time before being released or expelled from the country.

Some of the women who arrived had been transferred from other regions and assigned to serve their sentences at the Santiago Correctional Prison. Regarding the detainees who entered this facility, Nuria describes it as follows:

There was everything, everything, and they brought in people who had just been arrested too because there was no stadium (...) but not convicted, no, it was clearly transit, it was clearly still transit, that was very early, think about it, we're talking about October, in my case it was '73, so there weren't any trials yet (...) or the

.....
³⁸. The periodization we have defined at this stage is consistent with the information provided by one of our witnesses, who dedicated herself to leaving a written record of everything she could remember about La Correccional, once she was released in 1975.

They killed some, there were many executions where people disappeared during that period, it is one of the hardest periods, and the trials were much later, in my case they were during 74. Those of us who arrived at the correctional facility came from the stadium, that is, there were still no trials underway.

Upon their arrival at the prison, the group of women from the National Stadium encountered prisoners from other places, as well as common prisoners with whom they lived in a space that they gradually appropriated and intervening.

Special mention is made of two common prisoners who were initially in charge of the kitchen for the political prisoners, who were later replaced when the preparation of food was taken over by the "political" prisoners after they obtained authorization from the nuns to do so.

The testimonies recount that they established relationships with the common prisoners, building bridges that were important in the prison context, as recounted Lucia:

We used to play, we had a volleyball or basketball team, and we'd go play against the inmates, the serious ones, the ones who killed people, strangled them, and stabbed them, in the yard where the ones serving life sentences were, and that's where we played against them. I was on the team, so I remember several times I played against maybe a mugger, who had killed who knows how many people (...) It turns out the cook was a con artist, I mean, she was a common inmate. Unforgettable! She had stolen jewelry and everything (...) the food—which was a little better than the food at the stadium—was made by this con artist with the help of a mugger, Margarita. I really remember her. I used to dye my hair; I think it was short back then, so she would dye it for me. (...) Margarita would dye my hair, and she also had her hair cut very short, and she would put whatever was left over on her hair; we both had the same hair color. He was accused of homicide, and she was a kitchen helper.

According to the testimonies, one of the characteristics of the experience in the correctional facility was that bonds of friendship were generated among them, which, in many cases, remain to this day.

The building of emotional bonds and complicity in this prison is the result of an experience that was only possible to face by organizing, meeting, and taking concrete actions to improve the material and human conditions in which they found themselves inside this prison.

Among the first actions undertaken by the prisoners were initiatives aimed at improving the material conditions of this prison, which

Lucía remembers it this way:

(...) I remember a dormitory where we were crammed together, because it was truly impressive, and we arrived at some disgusting bathrooms, I mean disgusting, you can't even imagine. So we formed groups that cleaned the beds, cleaned the dormitories (...) the bathrooms. Just so we could arrive and live there. There was a tiny little patio and another one just like that, pure dirt, where there was an abandoned ping-pong table. (...) And there, crammed together, we found the most incredible things in the mattresses, hidden needles, needles, terrible things, covered in stains, everything was absolutely disgusting.

We do the cleaning there.

The experiences recalled emphasize the generation of bonds of coexistence established between the political prisoners, as well as between them and the women imprisoned for common crimes.

At the same time, there are accounts of mistreatment and humiliation committed by some nuns who guarded the prison, which were confronted by the prisoners who joined together to demand improvements in the conditions of this prison, as Nuria recounts:

I would say the nuns were truly awful. I mean, they didn't interrogate us, but they mistreated us, and they were threatening. I mean, they treated us very badly every day. The nuns were the worst, especially some of them. There were all kinds, good nuns and bad nuns, but the ones we got... they put us in the courtyard (...) which was the prostitutes' courtyard, the ones who were there by the day. They kept them for two or three days and then they let them go. So they cleared out that courtyard, which was a whole enclosure (...). And they had others: the ones who were finished off, there were the "blue ones" which was where the women incommunicado were kept, the women with babies, and there was this courtyard

per day. Then they moved us there, and the nun who ran that courtyard was a real "conchúa" nun, Mariana, I'll never forget it. She was Chilean (...) and ugly-looking. Mariana was the worst of the worst, the food they gave us, we ate potato peel soup.

Poor conditions, lack of hygiene, and poor quality food rations were some of the difficulties that quickly became triggering factors for the mobilization of the prisoners.

This organization was built on the basis of supportive human relationships and strong bonds of friendship between the closest companions, built in the common experience of detention in the Stadium and later in the women's correctional facility.

This is reflected in the act of "sharing the table", a practice that served to sustain the scarcity of food, as well as to affirm personal bonds within the different groups built in the correctional facility.

"The table" became a space of resistance, where individual stories converged to recognize themselves in a shared history they were living. It was a place of solidarity and unity where those receiving food from outside shared it with those who had none because they were far from home or belonged to humble families, as Nuria recounts:

We shared. Later, they let our families bring us packages, and you'd get cookies, I don't know, chicken, and the other one would get something else, so we shared it (...) There were tables for lunch, for eating... it was because we got along well, because we perhaps had the same perspective on some things, it wasn't that elaborate. (...) Yes, there was a selection process, saying yes to this one, no to that one. The people from the Communist Party were very clear about it because they hung out among themselves, only among themselves, and it was difficult to get into those groups, they were closed groups (...). All the others, imagine, from the MIR, the Socialist Party, from even stranger groups, were all mixed up... but the Communist Part

Lucía also remembers these shared tables from which she met Ximena and Nuria, a friendship that continues to this day:

We had visiting days on Tuesdays and Thursdays (...) and there were some people who didn't get any visitors, especially those who had been transferred from elsewhere. Very humble people, and so we, another privilege, all started to get together and eat at the same table (...) there were different tables. But we, the ones in our group, where Ximena, Nuria, María Teresa, Isabel Miranda, Condoro, and Condorito, who died in Belgium, were. (...) Well, it turns out there were about six or seven of us, and the cook set the best table for us. (...) Because, would you believe it, Nuria and Ximena—not me, not at all—but they got the most incredible things. Nuria's parents (...) brought her the first strawberries, you know, the first ears of corn (...) chocolate, they brought her everything. Ximena too. (...) So when one of us left, we had to earn our place at that table, which was a table set by Nuria's parents.

Faced with the poor quality of the food rations, some prisoners organized themselves to demand that the nuns transfer the management of the kitchen to the "political" women, which they achieved. This became one of the most significant organizational experiences they remember. It meant preparing better meals, thus creating a space where the different groups of inmates came together, as Nuria describes:

Those who knew how to cook took on the role of cooks and had to have kitchen helpers, three or four to peel potatoes, and we made up a whole story and started, through Ximena, negotiating with the nuns and we won. Then the Communist Party joined in (...), Amanda Altamirano ended up making us turrón, a hard meringue that was kind of chewy. So that's when we started cooking, imagine, for a hundred people; cooking fluffy rice, I mean, forget about it! Then things improved and after that it was a challenge, I mean, it was your turn and you'd say: "Let's eat well this week, girls, because it's my turn" and you put extra effort into that kind of thing.

Cooking together this time became an act of unity and rebellion that allowed them to resist together the precariousness of prison, nurture relationships between the different affinity groups formed, and enable a greater level of organization that

This resulted in the recovery of an abandoned plot of land inside the prison where they created a garden.

This idea came from Lucy Lortsch, a French historian who had been arrested for being the author of a text published by Quimantú considered defamatory to the figure of Bernardo O'Higgins, and was declared a danger to the internal security of the State³⁹.

She was detained in the north dressing room of the National Stadium and in the women's correctional facility, later being expelled from the country along with two other French citizens when she was released from prison in November 1974, a matter she recounts Nuria in the following way:

She was French, she arrived as a child. Her father was an engineer and spoke with a French accent, very ladylike. Lucy Lortsch was the only one I know who kept a record of everything that happened in the prison. Since she was a historian, she would ask you, "What's your name?" and write it down, and "How old are you? What happened?" (...) She never had children, then she went to France, she died in France. (...) One day she said, "You know what, girls? Let's make a garden, let's work the land." The prison had a large space, and in those days there was a courtyard full of stones, a horrible place. You know, she transformed it into a paradise, and we all worked there in the garden.

Those things weren't salvaged. Later, we would take food outside, instead of giving our relatives—especially the families in the most difficult situations—what we had grown and they could take it home, tomatoes or whatever we had... but the physical work was very useful to us, from agriculture, planting and

39. A press release from August 25, 1973 ("Author of historical defamation identified", *El Mercurio*, Santiago, Chile, 26.), presents her as Lucy Lortsch, author of the book *Chapters of the History of Chile*, published under a pseudonym, which would have earned the "repudiation" of "military and historical circles" by "defaming" the national hero, Bernardo

40. Expulsion Decree No. 1822, Santiago, November 7, 1974, Ministry of the Interior-Department of Immigration, Generals Raúl Benavides and Oscar Bonilla. Archive of the Museum of Memory and Human Rights. This author's book, written under the pseudonym "Ranquil," was titled *Chapters of the History of Chile* and presented an interpretation aimed at the working class as its readership, thus demystifying national history from the perspective of class struggle, which earned her the repudiation of the conservative press and the Academy of History, presided over by Eugenio Pereira Salas.

She was extraordinary at cultivating crops. She was already very old at that time; it's a shame she passed away.

This prison held left-wing activists, but also women considered subversive because of the role they played in their social environment, as happened with the group of 7 teachers from the Consolidated School of Buin, who –along with male colleagues– were labeled as dangerous to internal security due to the type of education provided in the rural area of Buin.

After this area was taken over by the Military Junta, the teachers were arrested and taken to the Chena hill detention camp and then to the National Stadium, later being transferred to the women's correctional facility.

There are also records of prisoners who belonged to other types of groups, such as the SILO humanist movement, as shown in Nuria's testimony:

We even had people from SILO, because (...) they were super anarchic, they advocated free love, they were totally hippies and they were people from these neighborhoods, La Reina... those from SILO today are the Humanist Party and they were put in jail because they were spreading things against morality and good customs, just like that.

The various activisms and experiences of the prisoners in the correctional facility converged in forms of action and resistance that responded to the diversity of women and groups existing in this place, as well as those that were formed based on activism or personal affinities maintained even after imprisonment.

The women testified agreed in valuing these bonds generated in prison as the only positive dimension of that experience, reinterpreting and reinterpreting it in their memoirs as the driving force that managed to mobilize the women despite the fear and uncertainty.

4. Between horror and tenderness: the politics of resistance

Between horror and tenderness, ivy grows.
In a sane state with madness, the flower, the stone.
Between horror and tenderness, life sings
A tune both clear and dark, profane and holy.

Silvio Rodríguez

The experiences of detention that we publish in this book invite us to reflect on the place that women who went through imprisonment and torture have in the construction of our recent history, and raise the possibility of interpreting these stories from a perspective that broadens the focus placed solely on victimization, to move towards making visible the life trajectories that transcend the period of detention.

This allows us to identify characteristics that shape a longer-term story, focusing attention on the resistance practices deployed by women with different experiences and levels of organization.

These stories form part of a shared memory of resistance against a model of society and culture built on relations of power and domination, based on class distinctions, as well as gender, among other inequalities that the previous ones cross.

By observing the ways in which the interviewees incorporated the experience of prison into their subsequent trajectories, we can identify various resignifications resulting from the different ways of living and suffering in prison.

This is evidenced by the fact that not all former prisoners of the dictatorship are currently available to speak about it. However, in the accounts of those who were open to sharing their stories, aspects such as the relationships of coexistence and camaraderie that allowed them to resist mistreatment, violence, and fear.

The women were explicit in mentioning that victimization does not represent the form of recognition that best suits them, because it anchors them in the past, a demystification that seems to them a necessary condition to rearticulate their life projects, as conveyed in Oriana's story:

(...) I have friends who have formed groups of exonerated people, and they cry and tell each other their stories over and over. One day I told them, "I propose something: let's not talk about it anymore because we're creating pure bad vibes, it can't be." I'm going to tell you something really terrible: they ruined our lives, why do they have to keep ruining our future? No way. We have to have strong souls, powerful spirits. Look at Mandela. We can't stay there, suffering and telling the story, always telling the story, over and over again. No! We tell the story of our pain, our suffering, but we overcome it. (...) it can't be, otherwise we wouldn't be good for anything, so they really killed us. And no way, Condorito said, "They didn't kill my soul." Sure, they beat me, they raped me, whatever, but the body, just the physical body, yeah, that's all there is.

something to think about.

We can also identify the effects that this experience had on a personal level, observing how some women have left their mark through literary works, seeking to express their own voice. The following poem by Oriana is part of a publication she authored and offers a perspective.
about this:

FEAR

I let the fear out.

From the dark depths of my being

I feel a sour taste in my mouth, I taste the salty taste of tears.

(...) I must wait for the order.

From the closing whistle

Because I accepted this game,

I must maintain my dignity.

The following excerpt from Lucía's story conveys the vulnerable situation of women facing mistreatment and humiliation at the hands of members of the military:

The one the rifles are pointing at (Fragment)

Sir, sir, said the voice muffled by the black rags with two holes at eye level covering her head. (...) Other voices joined in from the wall, forming a female chorus in that foggy, fearful October. The officer... if you want to pee, my dear young ladies and respected women, go ahead, I'm eager to see communist, MIR, and socialist backsides, so go ahead, pee in front of me. I'm waiting... we're waiting.

It was cold and the black hoods made it even colder that morning, which had begun at six in the morning, in a long and uncertain walk from the gym to the velodrome of the stadium.

Although the sun did not appear – perhaps it would never appear again – the stiffness in their limbs and the desire to go to the bathroom indicated to that line of women facing the wall that they had been there for many hours.

Among the women who testified, some became involved in political work on various fronts, such as the cause of the Mapuche communities or women's rights movements. Others seized the opportunities that came their way and rebuilt their lives, focusing on their professional and/or family lives.

After the correctional facility, most were forced into exile: Sweden, Germany, and England were among their destinations, where they rebuilt their lives. Not all returned to Chile when they were able to, however, they maintain permanent ties with the country.

The death or disappearance of a partner or a close relative, as well as the loss of a child, reveal the profound impact associated with what was experienced during the period of detention, complicating the discussion about the need to incorporate this dimension of the recent past into the education of young generations.

The experiences lived by women in prison and under torture, and later in exile, constitute fragments of a single experience of domination, faced by them from resistance, understood as a set of actions that allowed them to cope and project life in a context of death and dehumanization.

In this sense, it is pertinent to consider the concept of “infra-politics of the dominated” that the Chilean historian Rolando Álvarez proposes for those who lived in hiding, which can certainly be applied to prisoners of war. This concept implies that domination itself produces acts of resistance, and that these “not only manifest themselves in large social explosions,” but can also be traced in a “great variety of forms” and expressions (Álvarez, 2006, 259).

Observing from this perspective the ways in which these women coped with imprisonment leads us to the collective experiences and expressions found in their memories, which they now value as one of the most important legacies of these stories of pain.

Examples of this include the displays of humanity and solidarity within the detention centers that intersect with the experiences of the testimonies, revealing that these acts were not only manifested among the incarcerated women, but also – in the case of the National Stadium – by some sectors of the military towards the women, especially those who had arrived from the Antofagasta Regiment under the command of Sub-Officer Rolando López, nicknamed by the prisoners as the

“Papi”⁴¹, due to his protective treatment, as Silvia Leiva recounts:

I stayed in the dressing room closest to the Grecia gate... there was a guard there who was from Calama (...) that guard left a lasting impression on us as a group of soldiers who were very humane, starting with a lieutenant we ended up calling “Papi” because he was an older gentleman, and he would go to the houses to deliver information about us, because our families didn’t know anything about this. (...) since the relatives would stand at the gate and throw cigarettes, throw a little piece of fruit, he would give us permission, one at a time, to run crouching down, pick up the package, and come back, and then we would see who the package was for.

41. “El Papi” refers to the non-commissioned officer in charge of the Antofagasta Regiment, Rolando López. The name was researched by Pascale Bonnefoy. According to the interviewee, Bonnefoy also manages to describe “very well” the humane treatment he and the conscripts under his command showed toward the women detained at the National Stadium.

Similarly, the conscripts who were under the command of Second Lieutenant López are seen by the witnesses as the other victims of the horror that it meant to assume the orders received, and who somehow resisted in the only way they could: with countless acts of solidarity that, although small, meant moments that today they remember with gratitude and understanding in the face of what they were forced to assume at such a young age.

In general, these were young conscripts, averaging around 18 years old, who, being from the north of the country, lacked family networks in the capital, thus developing a unique relationship with the female prisoners. Records show that several of these conscripts visited the families of the prisoners on their days off, where, around the family table, they shared information about the conditions in which the women were being held and, at the same time, were able to obtain a good meal in a safe and trustworthy environment.

Some soldiers who were guarding the National Stadium later committed suicide, revealing the brutality and lack of humanity they had to face as part of the army during that period, difficult moments that Oriana recounts:

Once, a conscript was left guarding us, and it was raining. So instead of staying outside, he stayed inside, sitting on a bench that was there—the locker room grate and a park bench. He just sat there. And he didn't drop a bullet! (...) Bang, it falls to the ground, and he fell asleep. The poor conscripts... and then they shout: "Prisoner search!" "Bullet, bullet!" The conscript gets up, taps his heels, and sees that the bullet isn't there. He stays still, and one of the prisoners tells him: "Just stay put, stay still, don't move, we're going to pass you the bullet, don't move." And we were passing the bullet to the conscript. Tell me if this isn't an absurd world? And we put the bullet there. And he sighed. Later, when they had left, he said: "Thank you very much, thank you very much, anything you need." And then he would bring us little slips of paper, and

The above explains why one of the most striking manifestations of the experience occurred at the National Stadium, when the Antofagasta regiment was sent back north and the prisoners organized a farewell ceremony.

This ceremony included a theatrical performance, some of which was improvised with whatever resources were available, as well as speeches of gratitude and impromptu gifts for "Daddy," including a verse dedicated to him.

his wife, in which the prisoners thanked her husband for his human qualities, a matter that Silvia recounts:

But we, those of us who were arrested during that period, when it was their last shift, I don't remember where the paper came from, but we all wrote a verse to his wife, to Papi's wife: the human qualities of her husband... we all thanked him, it was something to be grateful for (she gets emotional) we all wrote something, we even left a message on his helmet with

hearts.

Another dimension of the relationships built in the Stadium was the presence of 16-year-old girls who, after being tortured, were restrained by the older prisoners, a situation that pushed them to the limit of pain, marking their lives forever.

Such is the case of two prisoners, one a teacher and the other a psychologist, who took on the role of containing the most vulnerable women, as recounted by Oriana in the following way:

The days passed slowly, too slowly, thinking, meditating, weeping for our children, and listening to the pain and horror of the torture our classmates endured. We even went out to meet them on the road, as they arrived staggering after the interrogations. (...) As a teacher, it was my job to help, to soothe almost unbearable pain, like that of a 16-year-old girl who was raped—not even by a man, but with something artificial. She never spoke again after that. (...) What immense pain I felt when I helped her bathe, taking off her blood-stained socks, while I told her she was pure and good, that she would forget, that all of this would just be a bad dream. Was it like that, Inés? Her name was Inés. Was it like that, little one? I hope life has rewarded you.

Another situation recounted by Oriana describes the role she had to assume in the face of the pain and loss of her comrades most severely affected by torture, minors or pregnant women, who were linked to the left, hiding her own pain to comfort them, a matter she recalls:

(...) a friend, about 20 or 25 years old, whose hand I took under the poncho I was wearing, and she said to me: "I'm going to lose the child I was carrying. They hit me in the stomach. I felt the baby trying to tear out inside me, my poor little boy. They kicked me on the ground, saying: 'So you're pregnant, you bitch? You're going to give birth right here, you daughter of a bitch.'" She wouldn't let go of my hand as she cried and kept saying: "He's all I have left of my partner." The day before, I had learned that he had been killed. I don't know where I found the strength to tell her: "This isn't a time to have children, let him go, tell him you love him and will always love him, you'll have other children, you're young." At that moment, my heart bled along with the blood of that dying child. These are such terrible things, I really didn't want to remember them... you see the vivid image of all those people, and such young people.

We can observe that solidarity was experienced as a profoundly human experience that brutally impacted women, with records showing that some of them attempted suicide upon learning of the death of a close relative, or due to the abuse suffered during torture.

The interviewees repeatedly expressed the perception that, despite their own experiences, they considered themselves privileged compared to their peers who suffered more severe abuse. In this way, a kind of "leadership" emerged, exercised by some women who stood out and are frequently mentioned in the collected accounts.

Among them was Dr. Elena Gálvez, one of the most respected female prisoners, given her expertise in caring for those in poor health. Also among them was María Cecilia Yáñez, nicknamed "Condorito," whose spirit of resistance and strength shaped the experience of those close to her.

Along with them, several women whom we have tried to make visible were named in the stories, referred to as "extraordinary women" before whom they acknowledge feeling proud to have met them.

The creation of bonds, solidarity, support and accompaniment, constitute today one of the most important dimensions highlighted in these memoirs, waiting to be questioned under the prism of the struggles and cultural changes that our society demands.

Words to raise the dead and make you smile.
Testimonies from seven women who
were detained in the National
Stadium

“WE MUST TELL,
WE MUST CONTRIBUTE TO THE
MEMORY OF THE COUNTRY”



Ximena George-Nascimento Lara⁴²

I have identified with left-wing ideology throughout my life. For a significant part of my youth and adulthood, I was involved with the Socialist Party. My history of political participation, however, begins earlier.

In 1957, when I was 13, I started being active in the Communist Youth. My family had no idea about it. Around 15, I left because of disagreements. I got angry and had a fight with my comrades from "La Jota" ⁴³, who were just kids like me, nothing more. Why did I leave?

42. Text prepared based on interviews conducted by Andrea Pequeño in Santiago, Chile, on April 22 and July 2, 2018.

43. "La Jota" informal name by which the Communist Youth of Chile (JJ.CC.) are known.

In those years the Communist Party was underground.⁴⁴ We, along with the kids, our comrades, would go out on Sunday mornings to furtively sell the newspaper *El Siglo*.⁴⁵ Then came the famous newsboys' strike.⁴⁶ The order we received was to throw vitriol at the strikebreakers.⁴⁷ I refused, because vitriol is sulfuric acid, it can blind a person, it's terrible! They told me: "You have to go!" "No! I'm not going!" I replied. "Ah, then, we're going to kick you out," they retorted. "Kick me out!" I protested. "We'll marginalize you." "Well, goodbye!" That's where my activism ended. No more "Jota." I left.

This was my school years. After that, I went to university, to the School of Economics. Although I wasn't an activist, I was always connected to the left, always there.

I completed one semester of my degree and then went to the United States for a year on a scholarship. We are talking about the sixties, the time of Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution⁴⁸. I remember that I used to listen to Fidel's speeches on shortwave radio and nobody knew, because it wasn't a topic in the United States: "Communists, no, how awful!"

I returned to Chile and continued my studies at the School of Economics. During my university years, I met someone. I got married in 1965.

My life during that period was that of a young, newly married student, without children yet. I also dedicated myself to doing things I enjoyed and wanted to do.

For example, I enrolled in a flight course at the Tobalaba airfield, and then I would go out flying. It was incredibly enriching and important for me. I met Margot Duhalde. We were the only women piloting there. My husband was also a pilot.

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44. During the government of Gabriel González Videla, president of Chile between 1946 and 1952, the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy was enacted, approved by the National Congress on September 3, 1948. This law, known as the "cursed law," outlawed the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh) between 1948 and 1957. Within this framework, the persecution of its leadership and members took place, the media outlets controlled by the party were closed, and its members were removed from the electoral registers (Avenida, 2016).

45. Chilean newspaper, founded on August 31, 1940, official media of the Central Committee of the CCP.

46. The strike would have occurred in 1960 (Rojas Flores 2006, 192).

47. *Krumiro* or *crumiro*, is a derogatory term used to refer to a worker who does not comply with the strike ordered by the union.

48. The Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959, overthrowing – through a guerrilla war – the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and bringing to power Fidel Castro, a lawyer, military officer and Marxist politician, who had led the Rebel Army and the revolutionary movement.

I was a pilot from the University Aviation Club. We had all the small planes in Santiago at our disposal. Of course, back then there were only two airfields, plus one for gliders.

Around 1967, in November, my eldest son, Pablo, was born. I stopped studying and dedicated myself to being with him, raising him, and breastfeeding him.

Around 1970, more or less when Allende came to power, I separated from my husband. We remained very good friends, but I moved out on my own. I had already returned to my Economics studies and simultaneously enrolled in the School of Geographers at the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. It wasn't History and Geography, but Geography. It was also something groundbreaking: I was the only woman in my class.

I was always a left-leaning student, but I already felt I wanted to get much more involved in politics and all that. The School of Geography was located at the Pedagogical Institute, where there was a strong political life, and so I began to get involved in countless things.

My life was something like this: I was studying both degrees at the same time. I had a little car and a young son whom I left at his father's house, my ex-husband's, in Ñuñoa. And I went to classes at the School of Economics, on República Street, and then, about three hours later, to classes at the Pedagogical Institute. I lived in Las Condes, at the corner of Hernando de Magallanes and Colón. I was very busy. And that's how it all began.

I was caught up in the coup.

That day, September 11, 1973, I was at home and my son was at his father's house. I was alone. I got up early in the morning to go to university and, as I still do to this day, I turned on the radio to listen to the news. I heard Salvador Allende's last words. I heard everything that was happening and, obviously, the statement.

It was: "Don't move!" However, in the morning, before they declared the curfew, I managed to go to my ex-husband's house to pick up my son.

I had already returned to the Economics degree and I began studying, simultaneously, at the School of Geographers, in the Faculty of Philosophy and Education. It wasn't History and Geography, but Geography. It was also something groundbreaking: I was the only woman in my class.

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49. Official statement from the military with peremptory orders and instructions addressed to the population.

I lived very close to Tomás Moro's house, so I heard the planes, the Hawker Hunters, flying by. It was a Tuesday, and I remember it started to rain around 2:00 or 3:00 pm, and I was saying, "Santiago is crying."

What was happening made me angry, but I also felt some disbelief.

At first, I thought, somewhat in a denial-like way, "this is going to happen, it can't be like this." I remember being glued to the phone, of course, as much as I could use it. Everyone was trying to get in touch, so the lines were busy, the system was overwhelmed. There was a bit of anxiety.

Then they declared a curfew, so I got together with my neighbors. One of them was Walo Escobar (Luis Eduardo Escobar), a good friend of mine and a classmate from the School of Economics. He was the son of Luis Escobar Cerda, who had been a minister under Alessandri, a right-wing radical, I think. But my friend Walo wasn't; he was a leftist. We spent time together with him and his partner.

In just a few days, everything began to change. I'd get news: "So-and-so was arrested," "So-and-so was killed," and so on. I never thought anything like that could happen to me; you know, you think you're invulnerable.

In just a few days, everything began to change. I'd get news: "So-and-so was arrested," "So-and-so was killed," and so on. I never thought anything like that could happen to me; you know, you think you're invulnerable.

At the time of the coup, I wasn't a formal member of any party, but I worked with the Socialist Party. Shortly after September 11th, I hosted a member of the Party's Central Committee. He stayed for a few days in

My apartment, and then he went to a town, where he was arrested. That's where the plot was hatched until they found me. That's when I came into the second part of the story: the arrest.

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50. At 200 Tomás Moro Street, in the Las Condes district, stood the Presidential House, acquired in 1971 by the State as a residence for the Presidents of Chile. From that year onward, it served as the official residence of President Salvador Allende and his family. On September 11, 1973, it was bombed at the same time as the La Moneda Palace.

51. Arturo Alessandri Palma, better known as "The Lion of Tarapacá", was President of Chile on two occasions, between 1920 and 1925 and between 1932 and 1938. In the last period, he assumed the mandate of the country with the support of liberals, radicals and democrats.

On October 11, 1973, I arrived home around 8:00 p.m. October is already spring, so there was still daylight. The curfew was around 10:00 p.m. I was with my son and some friends who were going to stay at the house. I had a Fiat 600 at that time. When I arrived, I noticed that two of the bars on the window facing the street were open, and I thought, "Wait a minute! Something's happened here."

Seeing this, I told my friends, "I'll take you." I drove them nearby, to another friend's house, and then came back with my son. Five Carabineros officers were inside my house, waiting for me. I had a trap in my house. I shouldn't have gone back, but I did because of disbelief. In those moments, you don't think things through because you've never been in that situation before.

Obviously, they had searched the whole house. I come from a family of booksellers, so, imagine!, there were a lot of books, clearly leftist texts.

They just told me, "She's under arrest." They didn't give me any reasons. That day I was dressed elegantly, at least in the eyes of the cops, so I spoke firmly: "We're going to take the child to his father's house," I said with a certain authority.

They agreed. That's how they found out I was being arrested. Because of that, and also because I said, "Hey, my car's out there, let me give the keys to my neighbor so he can bring it in." At that moment I managed to tell Walo, "Tell Lucho," who was another colleague.

Nothing! They took me and my son. It was already night. They told me, "Keep the child's head down, because you never know." We took him to my ex-husband's house, and he asked, "Where are you taking her?" That's how I found out where they were taking me: to the Carabineros Non-Commissioned Officers' School, at the corner of Rodrigo de Araya and Pedro

The next day, other people who had been arrested arrived there. I met up with colleagues, with friends. They put all of us together in a single case: in the end, there were 12 of us charged in this case.

At one point, while we were all sitting on the floor, practically facing the wall, someone put a gun to my temple. At first, I didn't understand what it was or what was happening. I looked and saw a pistol pointed at me. I don't remember the exact words he shouted at me, but it was Sergio Jiménez Albornoz. I don't know if

52. "Mousetrap" is an expression to refer to a trap in which the person is summoned to a place where they are surrounded, which means that they were waiting for them at their house to arrest them.

53. "Paco" refers to the police, used in a derogatory way in Chile.

At that time he was a lieutenant or captain, but later he became a General of the Republic. He was also one of those who constantly threatened us.

We were there for about three days. On one of those days, he told us, "Tomorrow, at dawn, we're going to execute you." It was an absolute abuse of power. They had everything in their hands, including our lives. They acted with extreme cruelty. I saw them beat one of the group, a local resident, with chains; another was completely swollen and deformed from the beatings.

On the night of October 15th, we were transferred to A police station of the Investigations Police, in General Mackenna. The journey from the Carabineros NCO School to the Investigations station, in one of these police buses, was terrible. The officer in charge, Sergio Jiménez Albornoz, kept telling us: "Look, look outside, because it's the last thing you'll ever see, because now they're going to execute you all, remember that." Just threats, lots of them. Threats. It was very tough. Well, actually, the cops from the NCO School intimidated us every step of the way.

We arrived at the Investigations headquarters. They had just opened it, so we were the first political prisoners to arrive there. They took us into a large office. There were several of us detained. We were all standing. Later I found out that several of them knew each other. Suddenly I heard one colleague say to another, "No, that's so-and-so," "No, it's this other one." And, well, there was another colleague there who we're like sisters to this day. We met there. We were the first women to arrive at that place.

In Investigations, they separated the men and women. There were cells, basically for the prostitutes, tiny little cells with a toilet inside. And then, downstairs, a place they called "La Patilla" (The Watermelon) which was for men. There were many men caged up there. I didn't see it, but I know what it's like.

And then there was a spiral structure, like shopping malls where there are small businesses, but instead of shops you had cells, cages, because they were like lion cages, just bars.

They had everything in their hands, including our lives. They acted with great cruelty.

I saw how one of the group, who was a local resident, was being beaten with chains; another was completely swollen and deformed by the blows.

We saw how they started filling up Investigations. There were several women, but the men were far more numerous. I remember Fanny Palta⁵⁴ arriving ; she was Argentinian, and then an elderly woman who said they were right-wing.⁵⁵ The military had raided her house and shot her husband. They killed him. I don't know what became of her, but I remember her last name: Ortigoza.

There was a girl named Patricia Ramirez, who was a prostitute, and they put her there too. They let her go quickly, and I told her, "Pati, call my mom and tell her where I am, tell her how I am." I gave her a slip of paper with the number. And she did call her.

I remember that my mom, knowing where I was, brought me a suitcase with some changes of clothes, a sleeping bag, and a large bag of oranges.

We were there for about four or five days and then they transferred us to the National Stadium.

We arrived at the National Stadium on the night of October 18th or 19th, 1973, and left around November 12th, which was when they closed it for the World Cup. I don't remember the exact dates, but it's approximate.

I remember that when I arrived, there were tables with people sitting who asked for your information and made notes on cards. They kept a record of everyone who came in.

From there, in the same stadium, they took us to the north locker room by the pool, the one closest to Avenida Grecia. It wasn't a fixed number of detainees there; the number kept increasing. When I arrived, there were about forty or fifty women in that locker room, more or less.

We arrived at the stadium National on the 18th or 19th October 1973, at night, and we left around November 12, which was when they closed it. because of the World Cup. I don't agree on the dates exact, but it's approximate

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54. According to the testimony of another participant in this investigation, Fanny Palta and her husband, Gonzalo Palta, were actors. They were arrested after police officers stopped the bus they were traveling on to Argentina. Fanny was later taken to the National Stadium.

55. "Momio" or "momia" is a Chilean neologism used ironically to refer to people or institutions of the conservative right. Its opposite would be "upeliento," which refers to supporters of the Popular Unity (UP) and, by extension, to leftists. Both terms are derogatory.

less so. But then it started to fill up, more and more women kept arriving.

While I was at the Stadium, I remember, "the ladies" arrived, the teachers from Buin⁵⁶.

The changing room had some closets and an empty section where we slept. I get cold easily, but I had my sleeping bag, the one that came in my suitcase. At first, there weren't any sleeping mats. A few days later, Amnesty International brought them, along with blankets—those gray, cottony kind, typical of military regiments. I think if you were to count how many sleeping mats fit lengthwise and widthwise in that space, you could get a rough idea of how many women were there.

In the morning, you could come and go from the changing room as you pleased. There was an area where you could be, move around, walk. Outside, there was a terrace—I mean, paved—and little paths with trees and grass where you could sit, and there were benches too. The area wasn't that small. It was to the east of the pool, towards Pedro de Valdivia. To the south, it was bordered by a fence that separated us from the other changing room. There were a lot of women there too. They wouldn't let us mingle. Well, I think there was a fence, although I'm not sure. I don't remember what it looked like, but beyond a certain point, you couldn't go past it. So, there was no contact between one changing room and the other. It might happen by chance, but no.

There wasn't one.

Currently, none of that exists. Only the north changing room remains, and the pool has changed considerably. Perhaps some of the trees are still there.

The truck with the food would arrive at the paved section of the terrace. We would line up to receive it. It came from a regiment located southwest of Santiago, I don't know exactly where, but the truck would pass along Beauchef Street, Blanco Street, Matta Avenue, and Grecia Street, until it reached the stadium. That was more or less the route.

56. These teachers were part of the group of teachers from the Consolidated School of Buin, arrested on October 10, 1973. They were first taken to the detention center at Cerro Chena and then transferred to the National Stadium. The teachers were led by Haydée Azócar Mansilla, the principal of the Consolidated School and a long-time member of the Socialist Party. A total of 14 people were arrested, 7 of whom were women: Raquel Ormeño, María Angélica Revco, Rosario Rodríguez, Tegualda Narváez, Sonia Valdés, Katia Pastene, and Haydée Azócar. When the Stadium closed its facilities as a detention center, these seven teachers were taken to the Good Shepherd Women's Correctional Facility in Santiago.

I noticed that sometimes the truck driver would bring packages and hand them out to some of the prisoners. "And what is this all about?" I asked.

I was told he was willing to deliver any packages families gave him. I approached him and asked, "How do I do it?" He replied that they should wait for him at the corner of Beauchef and something or other; it must have been Blanco. He was in uniform.

Every day, a cop would arrive with a little piece of paper, and you knew that the names were on that paper.

the people they were going to interrogate. He would stand up and He called. Every day.

He would appear and take the women from the list.

I remember letting my sister know, I don't remember how, maybe in a letter I sent her with a friend who was released. She, my mom, and many other people who were going to see the different prisoners stood on the median strip of Avenida Grecia. We signaled to each other from a distance and understood each other perfectly.

They and my dad came the whole time I was there. I remember that afterwards I told them—through gestures—that we were being transferred. They understood perfectly that we were being taken to jail.

From the paved terrace, there was a little path that led to the stadium. Every day, a cop would come along it with a slip of paper, and you knew that the paper had the names of the people they were going to interrogate. He'd stop and call out.

Every day he would appear and take the women from the list. Your name could be on it, and you'd have to go there. At least they took me to the marquee area, on the second floor. You'd go up, find yourself in a room with offices, and they'd make you wait blindfolded so you couldn't see the interrogators.

The forms of torture inflicted on women were always sexual. It was always about that. The women were beaten by groups of men.

Fierce! Fierce! When you weren't seen as part of "the poor," on the other hand, it was something more "civilized." The classism was appalling, it was awful. There was classism, I have no doubt about it. I, at least, noticed it, I saw it clearly. Now, I don't know if, maybe, it had something to do with someone recommending you, who knows, I have no idea.

I'm sharing my experience. I can't speak for others. I don't know what else happened, but I do know of female colleagues who were beaten there, taken in naked and assaulted. The worst offenders were the soldiers, the officers.

.....
57. "Milico" is a derogatory way of saying soldier.

From lower down, because the local soldier, no, or less so. There were a lot of conscripts there.

Those who returned from interrogations and torture showed caring gestures from their comrades. These were for those closest to them, but there was also a sense of affection among them all. There were a couple of doctors there: Elena Gálvez and two others. One was somewhat older, and the other was named Amanda—I don't remember her last name, but I can almost see her now: tall, dark-haired, robust, around thirty. They were only there briefly; Elena, on the other hand, was there the whole time.

She took care of the most damaged ones, so to speak, but actually, at the Stadium, during the time I was there, they weren't in such bad shape. The thing is, at the beginning, the soldiers didn't have much experience either. They didn't really know how to ask questions, how to torture, how to record things. In fact, on many occasions, they didn't even know the political standing of the person they were interrogating. In that sense, we were lucky to be there during that period, because for those who were there later, it was horrifying. They'd kill you!

The guard we had at the stadium wasn't always the same. They were groups of conscripts brought in from different parts of the country. They'd stay for two or three weeks, and then they'd be rotated to prevent any personal relationships from forming. My comrades and I particularly remember the one led by the sergeant we called "El Papi"—I don't remember his real name. He came from Antofagasta with his group of men. They were incredibly decent, very decent indeed.

However, there were other guards who weren't. But the one I remember most, and the one we all wanted, was him.

I remember one day I called one of the conscripts in my detachment and said, "Hey, call my mom and tell her to send me some mate." And they sent me a mate with a thermos inside!

At the stadium, we didn't get any information about what was happening within the Socialist Party. Where was it going to come from when they were all decimated? Everyone was just fleeing, doing whatever it took or hiding. The information or background we had came from those people who were arriving and could tell us a few things. There was no other source. We had no contact with the outside world. We knew about the tragedies that were happening and that so-and-so and what's-his-name were being arrested. However, in general, they didn't tell us much about the people who had been murdered; I think it was so as not to upset us too much.

There was a lot of tension, a lot of fear. Adding to the situation itself was the fact that several women recounted seeing the torture victims from the velodrome being passed by, things like that. There was Ruth Vuskovic, for example. Ruthcita saw her husband pass by; he died from those tortures some time later. Luis Corvalán's son was her husband .

There was also a lot of mistrust. You didn't know who was who. You only trusted your own people, the people you knew. You had no idea who anyone else was. You made friends, but only superficially. You didn't tell anyone anything at all.

In the midst of this
Despite enormous
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through activities.

However, even amidst this enormous adversity, we also did things to make daily life bearable. In fact, we invented ways to

To cope with anxiety through activities. For example, that suitcase I mentioned, which my mother sent to Investigations, was historic.

It was used for our plays: Because it was black, flexible, not hard, it became Barnabas's coffin. I was Barnabas and I

I put it inside the suitcase! I don't know how that got out

The idea of doing the play surely came up in some conversation. Then the military came to tell us they wanted us to put on a show for them, and we women

said no. We didn't really discuss it, but there was a certain leadership. I couldn't tell you who the leaders were, but we were a small group.

.....
58. Ruth Vuskovic was the daughter of Pedro Vuskovic, Salvador Allende's Minister of Economy, who laid the foundations for the economic policy of the Popular Unity (UP) government and belonged to the Communist Party. After being detained in the National Stadium, Ruth was taken to the Women's Correctional Prison, as documented in the 1974 UN Report on Human Rights Violations in Chile. This report also records the brutal torture she endured. She was married to Luis Alberto Corvalán Castillo.

59. Luis Alberto Corvalán Castillo, who participated in the Popular Unity (UP) Agrarian Reform Plan. He was detained in the National Stadium and later in the Chacabuco Prison Camp. He was the son of Luis Corvalán, who was General Secretary of the Communist Party of Chile during this period and until 1990, and was married to Ruth Vuskovic, who was also imprisoned in the National Stadium. In 1975, after being released, he went into exile in Bulgaria, where he died shortly after arriving as a result of the torture inflicted in the Stadium; he was only 28 years old.

60. This refers to Barnabas Collins, a fictional character (a 175-year-old vampire) from the gothic television series Dark Shadows. The Canadian production was broadcast in Chile as a radio drama at night between 1945 and 1982, causing a great impact during those years.

When were we going to be moved from
At the detention center, they released
many people who were not going
to be tried or anything like that.

But those of us who were going
to be tried and court-martialed were
sent to jail, to the Women's
Correctional Facility.

I think most of those arrested,
though I wouldn't say overwhelmingly,
were politically engaged. They had
a pretty good understanding of the
situation; they were left-leaning.
However, there were also those who
weren't. There were some girls, for
example, who were very young, and
others who were more rural, who
didn't really understand the political

issues or why they were there. They understood that they had been arrested by the
military, but not the historical and political reasons why these things happen. So, there's
a cultural aspect to it as well: how much you know about history and what has happened
in humanity, that these things happen, that they have occurred. Luckily, most of them left
quickly, because it was probably true that they had nothing to do with it. Only the most
committed remained.

It was pretty clear they weren't going to keep us at the stadium forever and that something
was going to happen. There were always rumors that they'd take us to this place or that place.
There was a time when it was thought that all the prisoners, men and women, would be
transferred to Chacabuco 61. But no, it was the men who were going to be moved there.
We women were transferred, more or less, as I already said, around the time the football match was coming.
But about 10 days earlier, they took a group of women to the Correctional Facility. They
had set up a small shed to receive them. Then we realized that they were going to end up
transferring all of us there. And, in fact, it happened when the large shed was ready and
they had to vacate the stadium.

When they were going to transfer us to a different detention center, they released many
people who weren't going to be tried or anything like that. But those of us who were going
to be prosecuted and court-martialed were sent to prison, to the Women's Correctional
Facility, so we knew that was going to take a while.

61. The Chacabuco Prison Camp "was one of the largest in the country." It was located
at the Chacabuco Nitrate Works, about 110 kilometers from Antofagasta. It operated
from the beginning of November 1973 until April 1975. It was for men only. It housed
"about a thousand political prisoners."

Some people will say, how do you deal with that? I am convinced that opinions on this have to do with each person's character.

Personally, I believe that to cope with it you need a positive attitude and, at the same time, the spirit to move forward and say, "Well, here I am." This also requires a degree of political understanding, knowing what is happening to you and why.

In my own case, I have to say that I usually tend to adapt and see the bright side of things. I'm not depressed, I'm not a crybaby. I mean, when these things happen, they happen! You find strength wherever you can and you deal with it. You deal with it!

You're much stronger than you think! Everyone is! I was stronger than I thought I was. I never broke down crying or complaining. In my opinion, there's also a cultural aspect to this, and it has to do with the fact that women are a bit like that: You don't let yourself get defeated. Well, but there were some colleagues who did break down.

They could have killed me any day they wanted, but it never crossed my mind that they were going to execute me. I didn't have that kind of anxiety. I don't know what it was like for the others, but I don't think they were thinking they were going to be killed either.

I was politically clear about why I was there and that this was part of history.

So, I knew this was going to end, I just didn't know how. However, it never occurred to me that they could kill me. No, I never even considered it!

They could have killed me any day they wanted, but it never crossed my mind that they were going to execute me. I didn't have that kind of anxiety. I don't know what it was like for the others, but I don't think they were thinking they were going to be executed either. to kill.

Returning to my story of detention, I spent months, many months, at the Women's Correctional Facility. While I was there, they sent me to a court-martial that I never attended, that I never knew about, that I was never summoned to. One day my lawyer, Nurielddin Hermosilla, hired by my father, arrived and told me: "You went to the court-martial and were temporarily acquitted. This means that for five years they can reopen your case at any time, as long as new evidence comes to light."

I must say that at the stadium I couldn't say for sure whether or not there were any infiltrators, or who they were, but it's likely there were. At the correctional facility,

However, we inmates did recognize them. Once, two large women were brought in, and we looked at them and recognized them right away because of their demeanor.

While we were detained there, we also invented strategies to cope with daily life. For example, I remember there was a priest from Navarre, Spain, who would come and say Mass. I'm not Catholic or anything, but I approached him and asked him to go see my mother and tell her to send me a portable record player and records. And my mother sent them to me, so imagine, we could listen to music!

Between the NCO School, Investigations, the National Stadium, and the Correctional Facility, I was imprisoned for 365 days, a year. I remember that clearly because they arrested me on October 11, 1973, and released me on October 10 of the following year. It was a long time.

After a year of confinement, 11 months of which were spent in the correctional facility, I was released. My lawyer notified my family, and they came to pick me up in my car, and I drove back home. Actually, to my mother's house, because I didn't have a home anymore. My house fell apart. It was a rented house; what were they going to keep it up if no one knew for how long or how it was being paid for? No! My mother handed everything over.

I spent about 16 days in Santiago, Chile, then I left the country. I had to go. I went to Buenos Aires. But during the days I was there, I saw family and friends. I remember falling asleep a lot, that's all I remember, I was exhausted.

First, I stayed at my mother's house. While I was there, I got a phone call from someone I knew, one of the twelve of us who were involved in the same legal process. He had been released and wanted to warn me that they were asking about me, that they were looking for us again, that I should hide, that I should leave. I went to stay with some friends. I was there for a few days. Nobody came for me, nothing happened, so I went back to my mother's house.

Meanwhile, my father and I requested an interview with prosecutor Rolando Melo. He informed me that all of us involved in this case had been issued deportation orders. At that time, the order was with the Comptroller General's Office. Consequently, he told my father—ironically, they're so sexist; he wasn't addressing me, but my father—"Look, the best thing is for you to leave the country now and not go alone to do..."

"Paperwork. Hire these people who handle paperwork and have them leave before this comes out of the Comptroller's Office, because they're going to arrest you again."

It wasn't a tip-off, but a comment—"this is what's going to happen"—and a recommendation—"leave sooner." And so, I left. I traveled to Buenos Aires with my son. We arrived in that city exactly 16 days after I was released. I was freed on October 10, 1974, and on October 26, I entered the Republic of Argentina. Then, I left that country on December 21, 1974, and arrived in Italy, in Rome, on December 22, 1974. That's how it was.

It's not that I have a great memory, but I think that these are such intense moments that they are not forgotten, only some details are lost.

My mom was in Italy at that time. My sister had gone there in December.

In 1973, she also left for political reasons. We are a family—at least the entire immediate family—who are left-wing, so of course, everyone was at risk. My brother had traveled to the United States on a scholarship and never returned. My sister went to Rome and stayed there.

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In Buenos Aires, my ex-husband, the father of my child, welcomed us. He arranged an apartment for us with just the bare necessities: a table, a couple of chairs, two small beds, a small stove, and basic dishes. He, too, had to leave Chile for political reasons. He had to leave early, quickly, because he was the Executive Secretary of the Automotive Commission of CORFO.

One of the figures hated by the right wing. At that time, cars were scarce in Chile, and the wealthy wanted to buy them, but getting a new one was like winning the lottery and depended on CORFO, where he worked directly. And, well, he was also a disciple of Vuskovic⁶³.

I was in Buenos Aires until December. My plan wasn't terribly clear, but while I was in that city I experienced a very difficult, very complex episode: the apartment

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62. Production Development Corporation, created in 1939 with the objective of promoting national industrialization through state intervention.

63. Pedro Vuskovic, Minister of Economy of Salvador Allende, who laid the foundations of the economic policy of the Popular Unity (UP) Government and belonged to the Communist Party.

The one where we were with my son, which was on the second floor for us, the first floor for Argentinians, had a small balcony facing the interior skylight of the building.

And on that little balcony, on my son's birthday, November 30th, they threw a bomb at me at midnight. We were sleeping when there was a loud bang. I woke up and then there was another bang. I stayed silent. It was raining that night.

I went to look at the balcony and there were the remains of the device. I collected them, wrapped them in newspaper, and the next day I went to FLACSO⁶⁴, where I had a contact. They told me, "You have to leave. It's a bomb like this now, and tomorrow they'll be waiting for you at the apartment door." So, I immediately arranged to leave and join my mother and sister in Italy, which was where I had a place to go. And, well, that's what happened. I mean, I stayed another 20 days, because this bomb went off on the night of November 30th, and I left on December 21st.

At FLACSO in Buenos Aires they arranged a scholarship for me. It was incredible! They told me, "Everything is super dangerous. You have to go to Europe." Many people were going to Sweden, and I said, "I'm not going to Sweden. I don't speak the language, and I don't want to be illiterate." I had family in Portugal, but my dad and I had been talking to the Consul there. This man, like others, was talking to my father. He was talking about my life and my future, and he was talking to my dad! I said, "No. Terrible chauvinists, ultra-Catholics, no way! I'm not going to Portugal." Then, "It's either England or France." They told me the best scholarships were in England. They would apply for one for me. They let it go, and I went to Italy.

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I'd been in Italy for a year when they contacted me to say, "This scholarship is waiting for you." I went to England without much thought. And honestly, arriving and living in that country was wonderful. Everything worked. People told you the truth and demanded honesty and truthfulness in return. A society of trust, Protestant societies. So, well, I stayed in London for 18 years. I spent my entire young adult life in Europe, basically in England. And I came back to Chile at 49, ready to start over.

64. Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, created in 1957 by the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as an international organization, intended for education and research, made up of different countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

If you ask me what prompted me to return to Chile, I would say I came back because of my stubbornness. The truth is, I didn't choose to leave; I was expelled. I never saw the Expulsion Decree, I must say. According to this prosecutor, it existed, but things weren't transparent enough for one to say, "I want to see it!" I have no idea where to look for it; I've never seen it.

But I left knowing I would return. In fact, when the government changed here, when Aylwin was elected, I came to vote. I was one of those people who voted with disgust, but I voted. I didn't like the idea of voting for Aylwin, but I did.

That time, after voting, I returned to England and went to the Home Office and renounced my refugee status. The Chileans told me, "You're crazy!"

I told them, "No, if nobody is persecuting me in Chile, I don't want to be a refugee. I'm going back now." I stayed as an immigrant and came back later.

I returned in December 1992. Back home, I had bought a house, I was working, I had a good job. When I returned to Chile, it took me seven years to get back the quality of work I had in London. Seven years later I said, "That's it! I'm in the same situation I left in England."

The return is very complicated; it's not simple at all, not pleasant. It has very beautiful and good things, and others that are terrible. It's like exile, exile in reverse. But I, like a stubborn monkey, said: "I'll come back, I'll come back."

I had several reasons for returning. One of the main ones was to come back and take care of my parents, who were old and alone. You have and raise three children, and then all three of them leave you, and you end up old, sick, and alone! And, besides, I had to come back before my daughter could make decisions on her own and say, "No, I'm not going." It had to be then, during that period when it was still possible to treat her like a "package" that I move from one place to another. And that's how it was. She was 14 when we came back. I wanted her to experience her adolescence in Chile, I wanted her to be Chilean, because I thought she would have a better life as an adult here than in England. She didn't have the social networks there that I have here, which would allow her to have much better access to and contact with society. I wasn't wrong.

However, I couldn't bring my son and his family with me. That's something I deeply regret. He was already married; his wife is Italian, and he wasn't going to move because he wanted to be close to his mother, so he stayed there.

65. Patricio Aylwin was President of the Senate between 1971 and 1972 and the first President of Chile (1990-1994) after the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

Living with his family in London. Each to their own destiny! But this is the knife that exile represents, that breaks families, that shatters your heart, your soul, everything. Exile is a dagger, and dictatorship is the hand that wields it.

During my exile in England, I maintained almost constant political activism in the Socialist Party. However, this changed shortly after I returned to Chile. Here, the way parties operate has transformed, and frankly, I felt it was already something foreign: I no longer knew many of the people, and the direction it has taken didn't seem right to me—and still doesn't. I'm probably still on the membership rolls, but that's because I haven't gone to resign. I left it there, and I haven't re-registered now either.

I no longer see myself as part of it. That's difficult too, after having felt like a militant for so many years.

I also made my statement before the Valech Commission, assuming it as a An act of denunciation and remembrance. Because I think we have to tell the story, we have to contribute to the memory of the country.

I also quit because after returning, I had to work incredibly hard to make ends meet. With a daughter here and a full-time job, where do you find the time for activism? You don't have a single minute! Plus, you get older and have less energy. I need to work less, not more. I need some time for myself, so taking sides with one group or another? No way! I've already done so much; now it's the young people's turn.

The fact that I don't belong to any political party doesn't mean my leftist beliefs have disappeared. Every time I've been asked to testify about my experience, I've done so. I've been summoned many times to give statements at the PDI67 (Investigations Police) regarding specific cases. I've identified the people who mistreated me. I once tried to file a lawsuit with a group made up not only of people who were detained at the National Stadium, but also in various other locations. We hired the lawyer Hernán Montealegre, and in the end, it was a disaster: he didn't handle it. I told him so to his face at the time. It was terrible.

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66. Until April 15, 2017, Chilean political parties had the possibility of registering (signing) the members of their parliamentary groups and submitting the documentation to the Electoral Service (SERVEL).

67. Chilean Investigative Police.

I also gave my statement before the Valech⁶⁸ Commission, considering it an act of denunciation and remembrance. Because I believe it's important to tell our story, to contribute to the country's collective memory.

Despite the above, I don't entirely agree with the proposal to open the Valech Commission records before the 50-year mark.⁶⁹ I know I'm going against the grain here, but there are people who don't want their experiences to be made public and who, perhaps, testified precisely because it wouldn't be known while they were alive. I think it would be terrible for them if these matters were brought to light now. I believe we must respect that.

Furthermore, I must say that some people have also fabricated stories. Certainly, these are things that happened and it is good to denounce them, but **there are those who have taken credit for other people's experiences.**⁷⁰

This is closely linked to the considerable degree of stupidity that also exists within the Chilean left and among former political prisoners: it seems that the more torture you endured, the more you're valued. I've never seen greater stupidity!

Or in other things that are said, like, for example: "What did he say while they were beating him to a pulp? Who knows how many other people fell for it!" You can't know these things. And if more people fell victim to that, it's human, it's natural. You can't judge someone else for speaking out, you can't do that. If all you had to do was...

68. The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, or better known as the "Valech Commission", was created in 2003, to clarify the identity of those who experienced deprivation of liberty and torture for political reasons, at the hands of agents of the State or people in its service during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

69. The decree establishing the Valech Commission stipulated that all compiled records would be classified as "confidential." The final report recommended that this secrecy be maintained for 30 years. In 2004, the law extended this period to 50 years. In 2016, a bill was debated to lift the secrecy before the agreed-upon term. However, there is no single position on the issue: some see it as a way to contribute to truth and justice in pending human rights violation cases by providing information about the perpetrators; others question it as an affront to the privacy and dignity of the victims and their families. Although it was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies, the debate remains open, even among those who testified.

70. Although we found no formal complaints regarding potentially "false" statements within the framework of the Valech Commission, it is important to note that this fact is also mentioned in Cecilia Riveros's account in this book. In this sense, we interpret this positioning of one's own experience (the criterion of "what was lived" firsthand) as a defensive response mechanism to the questioning and disbelief that still persist regarding these issues and that has resurfaced as part of a denialism that has recently gained renewed strength among sectors that were allies of the Pinochet dictatorship.

It was about making sure you gave the other person time to leave where they were. And, knowing how things are and that these things happen, whoever didn't leave, well, they'll have to deal with it. These are things well known from historical experience, things that happened in France, things that happened everywhere, that you had to give at least one day, one day upon learning that you had been arrested, clearly!

I had a strength

It stems from childhood, from schooling; character, more than anything, character. As I said before, I never felt broken.

And here I am. Life goes on. After that, many other equally difficult things happened to me. I've experienced complex situations, but also fantastic things that have happened to me in life, both before and after.

Personally, I have no problem with people knowing my story. Everyone who has asked me, and who has wanted to listen, has listened. I haven't put a sign on my forehead that says, "Listen to me!" either, because I'm not traumatized by political imprisonment, torture, or exile.

Fortunately, I had a strength that came from childhood, from schooling; character. Rather, more than anything, it was character. As I said before, I never felt broken. And here I am. Life goes on. Since then, many other equally difficult things have happened to me. I've experienced complex things, but also fantastic things that have happened to me in life, both before and after.

I'm a big friend of forgetfulness. I have a good memory, in general, but I've still forgotten a lot of things. And how wonderful that I forget them! I think. Are you going to live your life accumulating knowledge, information, details? It's impossible! You just have to be mindful of the present moment.

For me, losing the details, letting memories fade over the years, goes hand in hand with the realization that there is still so much work to be done in terms of memory recovery. And we are at an age where we are beginning to die. That's why I say that when it comes to matters concerning people, we can't let too much time pass. Young people who want to do research need to get moving!

I WAS NEVER ONE FOR PARTIES,
BUT I FELT THAT THINGS
THEY NEEDED TO BE MORE FAIR



Cecilia Riveros De la Maza⁷¹

I got married in 1963, my two daughters were born a while later, in 1966 and 1967.

I separated from my husband when my youngest was two or three months old. I continued on my own and started working. Actually, I had always worked except for the four years of my marriage.

I set up a kiosk in Las Condes, which at that time was practically in the foothills of the Andes. On weekends, people would come with their children to rent horses, and I would sell them drinks, cookies, everything.

While I was in this little business, Allende's victory came. I was living in Ñuñoa. I had a more or less peaceful and happy life with my two daughters, because I had the help of

⁷¹. This account is based on the interview conducted by Isidora Salinas and Andrea Pequeño in Reñaca, Chile, on August 8, 2018.

My parents. I didn't pay rent. Support from my ex-husband? Zero! Although I care for him, I must say that he didn't contribute financially.

We were happy with what we had. However, one day I decided I wanted to buy a house or a small apartment in Viña del Mar. I had lived there as a child. I don't know if it was because of the fond memories I had of that time, but for me, Viña was always the best. And that's when I told myself, "I'd better work in an office to save up some money." I knew how much I needed, so I thought, "I'll make the down payment in a year." Back then, there were savings and loan associations, so it was feasible to make this happen. "This is my chance!" I told myself.

At that time, I was already thirty years old and a very good secretary. I had studied business after graduating from high school and had worked as an executive secretary at a fishing company in Viña del Mar, and later at a financial firm in Santiago. I spoke with a friend who had a good job and could offer me a position. I took some trial exams and started at Montero. In those years, it was "the" hardware store in Chile, and not just the location on San Martín Street at the corner of Alameda, which I believe is still there today. It supplied the entire country with industrial products for mining and agriculture, for example. There were ten different

Before the Popular Unity government, this was a right-wing company, a real right-wing one. Then it was taken over by the government. Julio Estuardo, from the Socialist Party, was the first administrator, and he did an excellent job. He was a man in his forties, a lawyer, with enormous experience. He had been the rector of the University of Chillán. I mention him, my friend who sadly passed away a few years ago, because he's connected to my entry into the National Stadium later on.

That's how I got the job. Julio didn't bring me there; he connected me with the applicant. I was hired by the manager at the time, an Argentinian.

I worked there for the three years that the Popular Unity government was in power. The first few months I was the deputy administrator's secretary, and then I became the personnel manager's secretary. I liked the latter position better. I was part of Industrial Relations, which was the equivalent of what is now the Welfare department, and therefore it involved working with people. At that time, there were 320 employees, and I had to interact with all of them. My job was wonderful; I was responsible for everything from buying toys for Easter to helping families if someone

Well, I went in there and that's when inflation started, which completely changed my plan: the money was no longer useful for thinking about buying the apartment, but for living. Despite this, I was happy with what I was doing.

Everything was changing back then. You didn't know.

What was going to happen the next day, the day after tomorrow, and even less so in a month.

These were very turbulent times, with marches, occupations, strikes, and all sorts of other things.

We participated in the industrial belt, we went to meetings. They made us courses, for example, in First Aid, because it was known that something was going to happen.

Then, Julio was called to take charge of DINAC72, the state-owned company that distributed products throughout Chile (soap, toothpaste, oil, sugar, everything).

It operated in the building I still call Diego Portales 73. He was the first one in charge. Then another person arrived in Montero as the administrator. The MIR (Medical Residency Exam) began to enter.

In those days everything was changing. You didn't know what was going to happen the next day, the day after tomorrow, much less in a month. They were very turbulent times, with marches, occupations, strikes, and everything in between.

We participated in the industrial belt movement, we went to meetings. They gave us courses, for example, in First Aid, because they knew something was going to happen.

I did all these things, and to be perfectly honest, I don't know if I was committed to the Popular Unity movement or not. At 30 years old and with my head in the clouds, I didn't really know what I believed in. I just went with the flow, so to speak. Back then, people were either left or right, and to be honest, I was and still am somewhere in between: I look for the good in both sides and mix them together.

In any case, in the 1970 election I had voted for Allende. I was very clear that, under no circumstances, did I want Frei Montalva as president; I didn't want a Christian Democrat in the government. I also chose Allende because I

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72. The National Directorate of Supply and Marketing (DINAC) was created in mid-1971. Through it, the State was able to control the distribution of a large number of products. It managed the Supply and Price Control Boards (JAP).

73. This building currently houses the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center (GAM). It was built during the Popular Unity government, with thousands of volunteers completing it in just 275 days. It was inaugurated in April 1972 as the venue for the Third World Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). After the conference, it was transferred to the Ministry of Education, which renamed it the Gabriela Mistral Metropolitan Cultural Center. Following the military coup (September 11, 1973), and given that La Moneda Palace was unusable due to the bombing it suffered on the day of the coup, it became the seat of government for the military dictatorship, headed by Augusto Pinochet.

I liked the program. Although I was never one for political parties, I felt that things needed to be fairer. That's what motivated me.

At the beginning of the Popular Unity government, I thought we were going to have a better world. However, this feeling gradually deteriorated. As time went on, I realized how they were ruining the initial project. In those three years, I saw, for example, how they were undermining each other. I would say, "Poor Allende," because people from his own camp were hurting him. They did him so much! Of course, this is just my opinion, my personal view, but I believe that he won the election, became President, and, frankly, he didn't have the right people to work side-by-side with him on the ideals of his government.

In fact, you'd see those who took charge of these large companies and they didn't know what they were doing; they lacked the experience. For example, the administrator who arrived after Julio left DINAC was charming, but he completely lacked the expertise needed to manage a business of that size. The same thing happened with my head of Industrial Relations, who was a lawyer—a sweetheart, but a recent university graduate and, therefore, without any experience whatsoever.

It was so bad that we workers wanted this new administrator gone, because he wasn't up to the task. We organized a strike and were mobilized for about fifteen days. We practically brought the country to a standstill. There was a union in Montero, it existed before the administration. Since I worked in Industrial Relations, I had direct contact with them. I joined the union and even ran for representative. And, as I said, we went on strike. There were 21 of us leading the mobilization, that's why we called ourselves "The 21."

The rest of the workers really liked us, well, except for the old-timers from Montero. During this period, about 120 people joined the company. If there were 200, we ended up with 320. Those who joined were party members or, at least, friends of the party. That's what was happening. The same thing happened to Frei, but he included them in the ministries. So, for me, those three years were more about disillusionment, because you thought things were going to be different and then you realized that they weren't.

Well, after the strike they sent in a more experienced guy who, although he had political roots, wasn't a party member; he had a different profile. Those years were quite chaotic; people were coming and going, and that's how it was until the coup.

My direct supervisor was replaced by Lenin Guardia. He was incredibly entertaining. He had studied Philosophy and, like other people in the MIR who came from Sociology or Philosophy,

He had a different feeling, he saw the world differently. He was in office at the time of the coup.

I was never involved in anything shady, I have to be honest. Even after Julio was removed from DINAC to be appointed Intendant of Santiago, he told me, "You're going to the Intendancy as my secretary." "Great!" I replied. But when I started looking into the salary, I realized it wasn't in my best interest at all: if I was earning twenty in Montero, here they were going to pay me ten. And I told him so. He replied that we could work it out: the Montero union could send me on secondment to the Intendancy, and therefore, Montero would pay my salary.

A few days before he took office as Mayor, I spoke with him: "If Montero is going to pay me, how can I go work somewhere else? No, I can't." He got angry with me. Even though the job he was offering was much more important than the one I had, it didn't seem right to me. In that sense, I admit I'm a bit rigid. Tell me, if I had been the Mayor's secretary? They would have torn me to shreds if they'd arrested me.

The Popular Unity period was a turbulent time. I was 32 years old and full of energy. And then the coup happened. Everyone did

As I was saying, the Popular Unity period was a turbulent time. I was 32 years old and full of energy. And then the coup happened. Everyone did what they could.

That day, September 11th, I left home early for the office. I saw planes flying overhead. I thought something was happening, but I continued on my way anyway. When I arrived, I ran into another coworker, with

whom I was and still am a great friend. After learning what was going on, we left the building. She was a member of the Communist Party and had her membership card with her. We said, "They can't find us with this," so before we left, I hid it right there in the office; I don't remember exactly where.

We both lived in Bilbao, and one of the managers, who also lived in the upscale neighborhood, offered us a ride. However, he left us stranded in the middle of the street, at the corner of San Martín and Alameda, at one in the afternoon.

When the bullets were flying back and forth. I remember I was wearing a red coat.

Everyone knew the coup was coming. So, each of the industrial zones⁷⁴ had a designated meeting place. For us, based on the sector where our company was located, that place was the Fishing Terminal in Mapocho. We decided to go there.

We started walking along Moneda Street. The soldiers told us: "Go down the middle of the street, don't go along the edges, because you might be mistaken for someone else."

Everyone knew the coup was coming. So, each of the industrial zones had a designated meeting place. For us, given the area where our company was located, that meant the Fishing Terminal in Mapocho. We decided to go there.

This was in the middle of the coup, and I was wearing my nice coat. We went because we had to; those were the orders, and we were obedient. This might seem strange, but when you're in the middle of something like that, you don't really know what to do.

We arrived at the Fish Market around 1:30 PM. We expected about five thousand people, but there were no more than 100 or 150. About 20 of us were women, and the chauvinistic men told us to make seafood soup. I said, "Okay, but let's put the shrimp in whole." They didn't like my idea: they wanted them peeled, just the tails. Annoyed, I told my friend, "I'm leaving." It was unbelievable! We were there for something else, not to make "soup" for some guys who were being picky! It was such an important moment, and they wanted to eat shrimp tails! I thought it was the worst! Besides, why didn't they peel the shrimp? Why did we have to? I've always been a feminist in that sense, maybe because my mom and dad raised my sister and me that way. Anyway, we both left.

Although we didn't know the other women there, we warned them.

74. The industrial belts were conceived as an expression of "popular power." They emerged during the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970–1973) as a collective reaction by factory workers to the "boycott" and "destabilization" actions promoted by the opposition to the Popular Unity government. Each belt was made up of a group of industries in the same geographical area. By the time of the coup d'état of September 1973, there were 31 belts throughout the country. In the Metropolitan Region, these included: Cerrillos–Maipú; Vicuña Mackenna; Macul; Estación Central; Santa Rosa–Gran Avenida; Conchalí–Northern Area; Mapocho–Cordillera; San Joaquín; Santiago Centro; Panamericana Norte; and San Bernardo (Gaudichaud, 2004).

I think they'd said that you could be out on the streets until three in the afternoon; it was almost time and we were still in Mapocho. There was no public transportation.

We crossed the bridge to Avenida Santa María to hitchhike. Luckily, a car happened to be passing by and stopped. My friend says the person who stopped was a priest; I'm not so sure about that. However, he was clearly a guardian angel. It's unbelievable! The man was heading to Bilbao, where we lived. We dropped her off at her door, I got off at Tobalaba, and walked the five blocks to my house. I arrived before curfew and locked myself inside.

My daughters studied at the Compañía de María school, on Manquehue and Las Condes streets, and my parents lived nearby. So, from Monday to Friday, the girls stayed with them. Since the coup happened on a weekday, a Tuesday, they weren't with me, and honestly, I think it was better that they were with their grandparents.

In the days following September 11th, there was a curfew. You couldn't leave your house.

I didn't have a car and there was no public transportation, so

I had no way to move from there. I was

Alone. I don't remember many of the details.

from those days, but I know that my father once took his car and came to see me: he wanted to know how I was and also bring me some food.

I was known in the neighborhood and my neighbors were aware that Julio, until that moment the Mayor of

Santiago was a friend who used to visit my house. He was a public official; they were looking for him, and it was somehow understood that there was a possibility they would raid my place.

Later, it was announced in a public notice that people should return to work on September 19th. Consequently, I was listed as being in Montero on the 19th. By then, buses were running relatively normally.

I don't know exactly how many of us arrived, but not everyone was there. That's when we learned that one of the workers, a much-loved laborer, had been murdered: they caught him in the street at an unauthorized hour, poor guy. As soon as we went inside

In the days following September 11th, there was a curfew. No one could leave their homes. I didn't have a car and there was no public transportation, so I had no way to get around. There. I was alone. I don't remember many details of those days, but I know that my father once took his car And he came to see me: he wanted to know how I was and also bring me some food.

When we got to our offices, we realized the company was "busy": the old guard, the original ones, so to speak, had returned. However, those of us who started during the Popular Unity government stayed on, doing our jobs. We did it for about a week.

That same week we returned to work, Lenin, my boss until the day of the coup, called me at the office. I was surprised to hear his voice. During our brief conversation, neither of us said our names. We knew they could hear the calls. He asked me to meet him, giving me the coordinates: "Where we went last time with my friend." I understood perfectly: a small street in Santa Rosa, where a colleague had invited us to a party.

I took advantage of lunchtime to go see him.

I arrived at the agreed-upon place. I walked slowly around, looking for a man dressed in the typical attire of MIR members at that time: long hair, a mustache, a large poncho, and jeans. Suddenly, I heard "Cecilia" behind me. I turned around and found myself face to face with a perfect gentleman: short, neatly combed hair. It was him! He looked completely different. He told me they were looking for him and that he slept in different places. I thought, "If I, who worked with him for a year, didn't recognize him, nobody else will."

It was never clear to me why he asked me to meet him. Maybe he just wanted to talk and find out what was going on in the office. At the time, it never even crossed my mind that meeting with him could put me at risk. It didn't occur to me at all; I mean, in my thirties, I didn't think about those things. That's why now I see young people and say, "Cecilia, remember what you were like at that age." I tell my friends the same thing: "Girls, remember, remember when you were that age."

At that time I was sick. I had a lump in my breast. The technological advances that exist now to determine if it was cancer or just a nodule didn't exist then.

I was treated by Dr. Pabs, who at that time was the leading expert in breast surgery.

She had scheduled an operation at the Santa María Clinic for September 30th or 31st, around then. The surgery was on a Monday, and I worked until the previous Thursday. I don't remember what I did, but I was in my office.

I had submitted my medical leave, and yet on Friday I was notified in writing that I no longer worked in Montero. They carried out a mass layoff: I can say with certainty that all 21 of us from the union were fired.

I was paid everything according to the law (the years of service, plus the eviction month). And in that sense, I say they were fair to me. I don't know how it was for everyone else, because people didn't talk much back then; they were afraid.

That day was also eventful, because General Pollarolo⁷⁵ died that night. He had risen to become the top official and lived across the street from me (we had known each other since we were little girls, along with his daughters). Following his death, the next day, Friday, there was a great deal of activity on my street: countless cars and people passing to and from his house.

And it is precisely in this context that Julio calls me. Stuart. There was so much commotion in the neighborhood. It was absurd to think they would raid my house, so he arrived at my house around seven in the evening. He carried his things in a white bag, like the kind made from flour sacks for bread; he had changed his hairstyle and had a mustache. Lila, his wife, and a niece dropped him off. He was on the run, constantly moving.

"Stay here today," I told her. She agreed. We both thought it was a safe day. However, Things don't usually turn out as one expects.

That same Friday, my sister arrived from Ovalle, where she lived with her family. She was coming to stay with me, to keep me company for the operation the following Monday.

My house had three small apartments in the back, in the courtyard. I rented them out, but at that moment only one was occupied. The tenant was a doctor. I quickly assigned the bedrooms: Julio would take the girls' room, my sister would sleep in mine, and I would go to one of the smaller apartments. Everything was organized! We went to rest. My landlord and my sister obviously knew Julio. As I said, I had been friends with him for many years, before the Popular Unity government and all that.

Around 11:30
I feel like I'm at night
"Knock! Knock!
Knock!", someone
was banging loudly on
the door of the small
apartment where I was.
I opened it, in my
nightgown, and
found a
Machine gun to
the face. Let me tell
you, I saw a lot of
cops: they were
running across the
roof of the house, in
the yard, everywhere.

75. This refers to General Carlos Pollarolo Maggi, who had become Chief of Staff of the Chilean Army.

Around 11:30 at night, I heard "bang! bang! bang!" Someone was pounding on the door of the small apartment where I was. I opened it, still in my nightgown, and found myself staring down a machine gun. Let me tell you, I saw a ton of cops: they were running across the roof, in the yard, everywhere. In a split second, I thought: they're looking for Julio.

They took me to the main house. Before they did, I asked if I could change into a little dress. They allowed it. In the living room, they gathered my sister, Julio, and me. The doctor, meanwhile, was still in the apartment I rented. They started interrogating us. They asked us who we were, while they searched and searched. At no point did they say what they wanted. You know how raids are: they turned the house upside down, emptied the shelves, threw the books on the floor, and all that. I, being prepared, didn't have anything incriminating, not even a needle. The only thing that looked dangerous was a saber on the coffee table, but, although it was very pretty, it was fake, a prop. They took it and, before taking it away, they hit Julio on the back. They didn't recognize him.

This process of questioning and registering us lasted about an hour and a half. They were just about to leave when the phone rang. I had the house phone connected to the three apartments in the courtyard. So, if someone called, we all answered; if it wasn't for you, you hung up. Anyway, it rang, I answered, and it was the doctor. I was about to hang up when the lieutenant in charge took the receiver to listen to the conversation.

I never found out what my tenant said to the colleague who, at that very moment, called him. But something in those words made the cop suspicious, because they immediately went after him and dragged him in. Once in the living room, they threw him to the floor. I subtly gestured for him not to say a word. He understood, because he didn't say a single word about Julio.

Then they made us all get on the bus and took us to Los Dominicos, to the house of the doctor who had called. Once there, they made my tenant get off. The three of us stayed on the bus with the cop who was driving and a couple of others. The remaining 18 had gotten off to go to that house. About half an hour had passed when we saw about 10 of them running towards the bus and shouting, "The one who stopped is the big fish." Julio was "the big fish"; they had identified him.

I've thought about all this since. When he arrived at my house, all the generals' drivers were there, and perhaps they raided the place because one of them recognized him. Later, maybe my tenant, under pressure, pointed him out. I'm not certain exactly what happened. In any case, they let the doctor go.

There at his colleague's house in Los Dominicos. I never saw him again. I know that when I was detained, he returned to the house, gathered his things, and left. Later, I learned that he was apparently the nephew of one of the heads of DINA⁷⁶ or CNI⁷⁷.

I was never able to verify it.

My sister, Julio, and I were taken to the Military Academy. At that time, my biggest worry was my sister: she was younger than me, and I had always felt, since I was a child, that I had a duty to protect her. She was there, in the wrong place at the wrong time. She had nothing to do with any of this.

At that time, my biggest worry was my sister: she was younger than me, and I had always felt, since I was a child, that I had a duty to take care of her. She was there, in the wrong place at the wrong time. It had nothing to do with any of this.

We arrived around one or two in the morning. There were a lot of men and women detained there. Not inside, but in a kind of entrance area, a fairly large space. They started calling us one by one: "You, come here!" The interrogation was individual because, I imagine, it was a way to corroborate what each person said.

They took us into a large room where there were about five generals. You couldn't really tell what rank they were because they weren't wearing badges, nothing to identify them, but it was obvious.

Since they had found Julio at my house, I told them what was true: "He's my lifelong friend and also my lawyer," "I'm having surgery on Monday and he came to see me today because I was fired from my job." At first, the soldiers had no idea about anything. They were so lost, so completely lost, that I don't think they even knew who Julio Estuardo was.

All this to say, I have a perfectly healthy colon and excellent overall health, but that time, from sheer nerves, I suffered a terrible stomach problem. Every two minutes they had to let me go to the bathroom. A soldier with a machine gun accompanied me and went in with me. Do you think I was going to be ashamed? No! There were shortages back then, so there was no...

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76. The National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) was the secret police of Augusto Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile. It operated from 1973 until 1977, when it was dissolved following pressure from the United States after the assassination of former ambassador Orlando Letelier in Washington, D.C., by an incendiary bomb, where he was living in exile.

77. The National Information Center (CNI) was the political police and intelligence agency of the dictatorship, created in 1977 immediately after the dissolution of the DINA. It remained in operation until 1990.

What to use to clean myself: I tried to wash with water, because I was only wearing what I had on. In those circumstances, you didn't have a little purse with a handkerchief, nothing!

While you were waiting there, you didn't talk to anyone. You couldn't because they were pointing guns at you. They had us sitting on a tiled floor. Now that I think about it, we must have been sleepy and a little cold. We weren't wearing any warm clothes: I was just in my underwear and the dress I was wearing, that's all.

They called my sister in for questioning. I didn't care what they did to me, but what about her?! I was terrified. People were usually kept in for about 20 minutes, but in her case, an hour passed and she still hadn't come out. I was desperate and started asking the soldiers who were watching us questions. After about an hour and a half, they called me in and made me go back inside. All these generals were there, and my sister was sitting there, smoking. She had such an incredible personality!

Then she told me that they had started the interrogation by telling her that Julio, before revealing his identity, had said he was with her. Perhaps he hadn't said it that way, but that's what they told her, and she got extremely upset. She replied sharply, "I don't know him," "I came from Ovalle to my sister's house because she's having surgery on Monday, and he was there." I had instructed her to deny knowing him. She added that the family in Ovalle was right-wing and that they should ask for her. She told her version of events, omitting the fact that she had known him before. And, of course, it was believable: She lived outside of Santiago and had no reason to know my friends.

When there was no more capacity, they moved us to the dressing rooms of the The pool: a few went to the one to the north and others to the south. I ended up in the one facing Greece (the North Dressing Room). Although they separated us, there were many of us there. I didn't see it, but the other dressing room must have

After that, they released her. It was around 5 or 6 in the morning; daylight had already broken.

I, on the other hand, was accused of being an "accessory." I was happy with that title, because what mattered to me was that no one knew I was Lenin Guardia's secretary. They were looking for him, and I think if they had found out, he would have been in a very bad way.

Julio was left there at the Military Academy, and I, along with many other men and women, were put on a minibus and taken to the National Stadium. We arrived, were lined up, and searched. "All women to Dressing Room 1!" they said. Dressing Room 1 was its name; it was a locker room for the soccer players, under the stands of the soccer field. They kept us there for four days.

One of those nights there was a pretty strong earthquake and we were locked up and completely crammed together.

When there was no more room, they moved us to the pool changing rooms: a few to the north one and others to the south. I ended up in the one facing Greece (the North Changing Room). Even though they separated us, there were a lot of us there. I didn't see it, but the other changing room must have been the same. There were so many of us that we didn't have enough space to sleep; we slept right next to each other, taking up every available space.

Some details from those days are lost to me.

However, I remember there was a soldier they called "Papi" who would get things for us: sanitary napkins and underwear, for example. He was incredible; he was in charge of a detachment that came from the North and treated us more humanely than the contingent from the South, which arrived later. He...

He locked himself in at night.

I was told that he did it so that no one could enter; you could say, then, that he was protecting us.

Almost all of us who were imprisoned were young, apart from this common characteristic.

We were quite diverse:

There were sex workers and daughters of high-ranking officials who, for example, had been arrested not for political involvement, but simply for being secretaries at companies like

CODELCO, to name a few.

There was everything.

On September 30th they took me to the Stadium and around October 4th I moved to the North Dressing Room. I remember the latter well because we had some lovely gardens nearby. It was springtime, so there were flowers. We also had two brooms. We fought over them to sweep; we had to keep busy. I don't think the National Stadium was ever cleaner than it was then. We cleaned the bathrooms, everything spotless and organized. I was in charge of the medicine. We didn't hand it out freely, because someone might grab a bunch of aspirin and eat them. Of course, it wasn't like we had that much medicine.

I'm going to talk about what happened to me, because there must be different issues among those of us who were there.

Almost all of us who were imprisoned were young, apart from this common characteristic we were quite diverse: there were sex workers and daughters of high-ranking officials, and, for example, they had not been captured for any involvement

politics, but for being secretaries of companies, like CODELCO⁷⁸, to name a few.

There was a bit of everything. There were, of course, those who apparently had no political affiliation whatsoever: one said that one night she went out to buy a Tapsin and was captured. Another said that her neighbor had said something or other.

Now, perhaps no one told the truth, because no one trusted anyone. In fact, politics wasn't discussed. No one said "I am this," "I am that," because you didn't know who was who. Anyway, some were more rebellious than others. Among them was a young doctor. Although there were several doctors, I remember her more because she was rebellious, very rebellious. They kept her isolated almost all the time, alone in a separate place, and forbade us from speaking to her. However, we would walk by and say anything to her. I don't remember her name.⁷⁹

Some nights, the sex workers would have parties with the soldiers in the bathrooms. We weren't stupid; we all knew. What did it matter if they got a little extra bread? That was their business, and they owned their own bodies. You can't judge that.

As I said, the dressing room was located towards Avenida Grecia. When we looked in that direction, we could see, through the gates and from a distance, people waiting and waving to us. The Palestro⁸⁰ sisters, for example, were among those who were going to be out there. They were going to see their friends who had been arrested, and then they were arrested themselves. I slept with them afterwards.

Later, I learned that my mother was coming to see me with my daughters. I never saw her. What possessed her to think it was a good idea to bring them?! I don't know, I don't think I've ever really understood that.

The soldiers were so disoriented that one day they went to the locker rooms asking for volunteer secretaries. They wanted help with the administrative tasks, for example, filling out forms with the information of the detainees entering the stadium. Many women volunteered. I didn't want to; I refused.

When I arrived at the stadium, I didn't know any of the women there. Then, as the days went by, I made a small group of friends.

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78. National Copper Corporation of Chile.

79. It is plausible that this is Dr. Elena Gálvez, who was held incommunicado and placed in a location adjacent to the North Dressing Room where the detainees slept. Dr. Gálvez played a crucial role in the lives of several of the women interviewed for this research.

80. It refers to Sandra and Sonia Palestro.

Unfortunately, I don't remember their names. I'd love to know them. One of them, who was very nice, had a child. There was also a 16-year-old girl, so innocent, so virginal and loving. I don't know if the story she told is true, because people made up stories. For example, according to my friends, it was said that I was Julio's lover, but I never was. The friendship we had was twisted. Anyway, this girl said that one day her brother, from the MIR or whatever he was, because she wasn't sure either, asked her to go with him to a friend's house to drop off some things. They were in the truck and they were stopped, for a routine check, common at that time. The "things" they were carrying were machine guns! They arrested her.

I was 33 years old then, she was like a daughter to me. I saw her so young amidst everything they put her through: She told us that when the interrogations began, they didn't beat her, but blindfolded her, made her undress, and put her in a coffin-like space. The torture they inflicted on her was psychological. Taking off her clothes in front of so many men must have been terribly intimidating for her, at 16 years old.

They didn't have to pry any information out of me, but they had to get it out of her—they found her with machine guns! She had some information: who her brother's friend was, for example. In my case, what were they going to check? The person I was covering for was 6'3" and weighed 185 pounds!

Every time they interviewed me, I said, "He's my friend. Didn't you have a friend in the UP?" That got them all. Whether they were generals, colonels, or whatever, they all had a friend in the UP!

As I was just telling the story of the young girl, the image of Cecilia⁸¹ came to mind. She had the same name as me, which is why I remember it so well. She was older than us. Ceci must have been around 50 years old and had a 25-year-old daughter who was a member of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). She was slim, petite, blonde, and short. She was a socialite, yet she was involved with "condoritos" (a derogatory term for young me

In my case, what were they going to check? The person I was covering for was 1.90 meters tall and weighed 85 kilos! Every single day. When they interviewed me, I would say, "He's my friend. Didn't you have a friend from UP?", and with that I would mess with them. Whether he was a general, a colonel, or whatever, everyone had a friend who was

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81. This refers to María Cecilia Yáñez, who was also detained in the National Stadium and in the Women's Correctional Facility and was known among the detainees as "La Condorito" or "La Condoro".

Back then, it wasn't common for people to walk around Providencia, for example, wearing flip-flops, but she was totally hippie, so those things didn't bother her. They called her Napo, after Napoleon I think, or Condoro, because of the sandals she wore. She was very entertaining and very loved.

She was suffering terribly, they beat her badly, but she endured it without revealing her daughter's whereabouts. She was left badly beaten, but she continued telling us her stories. She would say, "What did I do to deserve this?" because apparently the soldiers thought her nicknames were actually her code names, her "code names."

We all loved her very much, like a mother. It was her birthday in October, and we said, "Let's throw her a birthday party." You might be wondering, "What would a birthday celebration be like there?" We dressed up in whatever we could find and gathered by the pool. She was sitting on a throne, because she was a queen, or a princess, and she was receiving the ambassadors—and their entourages—who came from different countries to give her gifts: "The ambassador of Romania, to Your Excellency." Oh, how lovely! Each one brought her a present. Some of us picked little flowers and made her bouquets.

Others, I remember, brought her a soap sculpture—it was beautiful! There was a little girl who made the most beautiful things. She had made chess pieces out of soap—it was incredible! And we used to play with it; that was the best part. Now I think it's a shame I didn't keep some of the little things she made. Some people offered her an orange. This was also a precious gift because we usually gave the fruits and things that came from outside to the pregnant women. There were several of them, some of them foreigners, from Bolivia and Peru, and food wasn't plentiful, so we preferred that they have an apple, an orange, the best of what we had. What was left was for us, which wasn't much at all.

After all that parade, we sang "Happy Birthday" to her. We finished singing, and from the other dressing room, which was about 100 meters away and where they didn't know Cecilia because we had no contact with her, they started singing "Happy Birthday" too. Amazing! I swear, even today I get emotional remembering this. It was so lovely! I think incredible things happened inside too.

There was another one who was a lawyer, who was also treated very badly; I think she had a closed TEC (Technical Education Center). There were older people there, and I think they must have been powerful. You didn't know why they were inside. There were some with very high political sta

They didn't touch those anymore. There was Vuskovic⁸²'s daughter, Amanda Recabarren⁸³. My impression was that they mistreated those women who were from the guerrilla, from the grassroots, much more.

And there was also a blonde woman, with beautiful blue eyes, tall, very funny, who was a member of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). She was about 30 or 32 years old. She said she lived in a house, rented it to the Party, I don't know, in Puente Alto, something like that. She said she knew they were going to raid it, and sure enough, they did. And she said, while miming what she was describing: "The cops were going with these machines to drill into the pool – 'tack, tap, tap' – and they broke it looking for weapons." They turned the house upside down and couldn't find anything. Until the last day, they discovered them in some poufs she had in the living room. And they arrested her. She was one of those they took to La Reina prison. "They electrocuted me there," she recounted in detail. She was very gray

They gave us
Breakfast: a green bowl,
one of those typical
casino bowls, with very, very
sweet coffee with milk
and a whipped bread roll.
Later I discovered that they
put condensed milk in
the coffee.
It was super sugary, but
delicious. Of course, with
how hungry we were!
For us, that
The whipped bread was
the most delicious in the world.

Maybe I was the only one who gained weight at the stadium. I've always been careful to stay slim, so I, being so regal, ate lettuce, drank milk, the bare minimum, and practically no sugar. But there, they'd wake us up—there was this skinny little lieutenant who was rude and would kick the door, hateful—and give us breakfast: a green bowl, one of those typical casino bowls, with very, very sweet coffee with milk and a piece of bread. Later I found out they put condensed milk in the coffee. It was super sugary, but tasty. Of course, with the hunger one gets...

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82. This refers to Ruth Vuskovic, daughter of Pedro Vuskovic, Minister of Economy under Salvador Allende, who, after being detained in the National Stadium, was taken to the Women's Correctional Prison, as stated in the Report on Human Rights Violations in Chile, prepared in 1974 by the UN.

83. This name does not appear on the only list of prisoners that exists, however, Cecilia remembers it.

84. In the La Reina district is the Chilean Army War Academy, a site where torture took place. Until 2018, photographs and plaques referencing the deceased Manuel Contreras Valdebenito, former Director of the DINA and sentenced to more than 500 years for crimes against humanity, were kept on the premises.

It had it! For us, that whipped bread was the most delicious in the world. We usually ate half and saved the other half.

Around three in the afternoon, they'd throw us a plate of beans with string. "Jumping beans," we called them, because they weren't cooked properly; they were the same ones they gave the soldiers. Despite this, and I don't know if it was hunger, but I didn't find them so terrible. And you'd eat them with half the bread you'd saved. And then, around 10 at night, the Red Cross would give us milk. So, we had three meals a day.

The Red Cross was always there, at least during the 17 days I was imprisoned. They gave us medicine, brought us underwear, lined us up, and gave us a spoonful of laxative. And we all ate it, because we didn't have any fruit or salad. Once, they even fumigated. A friend and I hid: "They're not going to fumigate me," I said. I refused and hid. They put the rest of us in the bathroom, naked, and sprayed them under our arms, on our pubic areas, everywhere there was hair, for fleas, for lice, for everything.

During the day, we were outside the dressing room almost all day, except when we were punished for misbehaving. If we sang songs by Parra, or anyone else, "What's the Tomato's Fault?", I don't know. They were protest songs.

There was one of the guards, I told you. At that time, the singer Leonardo Favio was there, and he was just as wonderful, regal, handsome. He must have been about 24 years old, and he was charming. And we used to tease him, because we had to number ourselves, and we'd say 1, 2, 3, 5, 7. We were naughty, mischievous with him. And there was an older lady there, and we reminded him of his mother, so he couldn't be too hard on us. He resigned afterwards.

At the stadium, they interrogated me about three times. They never used physical violence against me. Some of my teammates were taken out of the locker room, and I think they were taken to La Reina prison. They had a terrible time; they arrived in a lot of pain. In fact, the one I was just telling you about who had her weapons searched in the pool was

When they took us to be questioned, right there in the stadium, they first left us in the stands by the soccer field. We had to wait there sitting down.

They placed us in separate sections from the men and women. And from there, at least in my experience, the women were gradually taken to the area where the journalists stand when a game is being broadcast.

I remember that one day, while we were waiting in the galleries, there was a really beautiful thing: We were there, I don't know how many of us there were, 5,000 or 6,000, maybe.

We watched them mowing the field with the carts. And then, suddenly, one of the carts rolled into the goal and we all shouted loudly and in unison: "Gooooo!" This really happened; I was there. Just think, we were all detained, and yet, even in the most worrying and painful circumstances, the festive spirit emerges, the ability to joke, to laugh.

I was afraid because at the stadium, at night you could feel the gunshots. And the guards were kids from the north, 16 or 17 years old, fresh out of school, they didn't even know how to hold a machine gun. They were also victims. They, victims, total, poor.

After the three interrogations, they were going to send me to jail. And one day they called me as At 11 o'clock at night. There was a knock at the gate, because we were locked out: "Cecilia Riveros!" A young guy pulled me out. From the locker room, we had to walk about two blocks. It was pitch black, and I kept asking him, "Do you know the password?" because they changed it every day, and they needed to know it in case they ran into someone on the way. I was scared because at the stadium, you could hear the gunshots at night. And the guards were kids from the north, 16 or 17 years old, just starting out; they didn't even know how to handle a machine gun. They

were victims too, total victims, poor things. And he was right behind me, and I was terrified that he'd accidentally fire a bullet, that he'd forget the password and they'd shoot us inside, or that we'd get hit by a bullet from outside. It was terrible, very distressing for me. I was somewhat traumatized by it.

We finally arrived safely at the place where the stadium's top official was. Before all this, I had met a young man who was in the Air Force. He was one of the many friends of a friend who had been to my house two or three times. I had nothing to do with him; I just knew him. And I went into this place with the stadium official and saw him there. I didn't say a word. They sat me down and asked me two or three questions—they must have been stupid—and took me back to the locker room. I saw him and stayed quiet because I didn't know what to do. Later, they called me again, and he was there again. After that, one day, around midday, they called me for the third time and said, "Take your things; you're leaving." This last time, he was there too. They took my picture and gave him a letter. He was supposed to take me, and I didn't know where.

Finally, this Chilean Air Force officer rescued me. I got into his car and he said, "I'll take you home." On the way, he told me he had come to visit me at my house, apparently.

Without knowing I was under arrest, and my mother had yelled at him, "Get out of here, you fucking communist!" She didn't know who he was, but the mere fact that he came to see me already made him a "communist sympathizer." This guy became sort of friendly with my mother, and she told him I was in jail. Maybe he did know about this little group of mine, who knows? And it turned out he was part of the super-espionage network; that is, they were spying on each other, because there were some constitutionalists and others coup plotters. I found out later through other reasons.

On the way to my house, we passed by Antonio Varas Street, where the Carabineros School is located. They pulled us over, and a cop asked him his name, sticking his submachine gun inside the car. They made him get out with his hands up. The car stayed parked with me inside, and I noticed the letter on the seat. I opened it. It said he would take me to El Bosque because I would be more useful there than where I was. In other words, he had actually kidnapped me.

He came back, we resumed our journey, and he dropped me off at my house. If I hadn't read that letter, I would never have known how he got me out of the stadium.

Now, I couldn't tell him that I had read the letter.

All I wanted was to get home, hug my girls, and be with them for my birthday that same month. And he told me, "You're going to celebrate it at home."

When they took me

The prisoner's main request was that they call the doctor.

and they told her she wasn't going to have the surgery. Once free, I made the doctor's appointment.

I arrived at the consultation room and the first thing

she said to me was: "So badly burned, so you were o

I was tanned, because

we spent all day outside of the

dressing room, in the courtyard.

I honestly don't know what conversation he had with my mom. He never told me.

She was very special, strong, regal, and only 16 years older than me. He must have helped her, because he must have seen her desperate with her two little girls, who knows. I'll never know for sure, because she's passed away.

On the other hand, I was worried about my surgery; my breast was still oozing pus, and I didn't know if I had cancer or not. During my detention, although there were doctors present, no one examined me, but they did give me anti-inflammatories. I remember that the doctors were cruel to each other. The imprisoned doctors were treated terribly, as if they were getting revenge.

When I was arrested, my main request was that they call the doctor and tell her I wasn't going to the surgery. Once I was free, I made the appointment.

I arrived at the appointment and the first thing she said to me was, "So you're so sunburned, so you were out in the snow?" I was tanned, because we spent all day outside the locker room, in the courtyard. And then I answered her, "Yes, in the snow at the National Stadium! I was in jail!" She was very surprised; she had no idea.

As I said before, she was the best in her field at that time, and she was one of the most expensive doctors around. She told me, "I'll see you the day after tomorrow at San Juan de Dios Hospital. Just show up there." Back then, you couldn't just walk into hospitals; you needed a permit. On the appointed day, I went, and they put me in a room with several other patients waiting for surgery. I arrived, I remember, on a Tuesday, and I had the surgery on Saturday. Fortunately, it wasn't cancer!

No one was allowed in the hospital, but the day before the operation, the Chilean Air Force (FACH) officer who had rescued me came to see me. I think my mother alerted him. He spent some time with me. We didn't mention what had happened, because at that time no one talked about anything. After September 11, 1973, people were much more secretive. Everyone was afraid, because if someone said anything they didn't want, they'd be thrown in jail: they'd fight over a chicken, for example, and they'd accuse you of who knows what, and you'd be locked up, my dear.

Afterwards, I went for a follow-up appointment at the doctor's private practice, and when I asked her how much I owed her, she said, "Nothing. I operated on you in a public hospital." Fantastic!

The group from the stadium locker room and I got together at my house some time later. There were about eight of us, but I don't remember exactly who they were. It was only once. When I got out of prison, my mom came to live with me.

She took over the big house, and my daughters and I went to one of the apartments in the back. I was in total control! I think that was the worst part: being with my mom as my jailer and without a job.

I was completely marked. My dad was a company manager and even so I didn't have access to a position. I was out of work for almost two and a half years. It was terrible! I had to be supported by my parents. Although they never made me feel this way, they still restricted me.

I never knew for sure, but I don't think it left a record, since there was no trial, no conviction, nothing. However, being fired in September of '73 was already enough of a record. Nobody would hire me; it was impossible. I was completely blacklisted. My father was a company manager, and even so, I didn't get anywhere.

Access to a job. I was unemployed for almost two and a half years. It was terrible! I had to be supported by my parents. Although they never made me feel this way, they still restricted me.

During that time I did odd jobs. In fact, I started working from home with a typewriter: I filled out mortgage loan applications. I would make, for example, eight typed copies of the same document and get paid for each one. I'm talking about 1974, when there were no photocopiers.

Then, in December 1975, I joined a company as a manager's secretary. The manager was my dad. If it hadn't been him, I wouldn't have made it. Up until then, I was still living with my mom, who kept a close eye on me. I started looking for a place to move to. And just the following year, they were opening a branch in Viña del Mar. It was my lifelong dream! I applied immediately. I got the job and moved there. I became the office manager. There, with those colleagues, I couldn't talk about these things; it was best that no one knew I had been arrested. at the National Stadium.

I kept that job until '83, when the economic crisis hit and all of Chile went bankrupt. It was chaos! Overnight, I was out of a job, without severance pay, without anything. I had to rebuild my life. With a cousin, we got the management of the cafeteria at the Gustavo Fricke Hospital in Viña del Mar. We were such good at running the concessions that we ended up managing four locations. We barely made ends meet. We weren't experts, so we spent a lot of money on decorations (we put in flowers, bushes, poinsettias). On top of that, the cost of living started to rise. We had to adjust the menus to stay afloat. The money wasn't enough because the CPI was rising, 20% or 25% annually. Until we said, "No more!"

After that, I started working at the Parque del Mar Cemetery. It might seem strange or at least curious to you, but this is the place I've liked the most. In Chile, before Parque del Recuerdo was established, there was nothing like it. I started as a salesperson and then moved to the Comprehensive Care team, which advised people who had lost a family member: choosing the

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85. During the 1980s, in the midst of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship and after several years of neoliberal economic reforms and as a consequence of Structural Adjustment Policies, Chile faced the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression in 1929. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell by 14.3% and unemployment rose to 23.7%.

86. In everyday language, "casino" is equivalent to a cafeteria.

the urn, the place it would occupy in the park, the organization of the burial ceremony, and so on. The cemetery itself and the funeral home completely broke the mold.

Everything was full of light, beautiful, not gloomy at all. I was there for 20 years, from '87 to 2007, and I retired.

Getting back to the stadium. The truth is

When I left that place, I didn't have a space to talk about it openly with my family. It was like being locked up, and as a consequence, for years I had to sleep with my daughters, cuddled up to them. I could never sleep alone again. It happened to me in '73, and I slept with them until about '80. They were grown by then, and I slept in the same bed. At the time, I didn't think much of what was happening to me, but later, when I thought about it, wow!, I felt uneasy. In a way, I was suffering the aftereffects of being locked up.

Getting back to the stadium. The truth is that when I left that place, I didn't have a space to talk about it openly with my family. It was a

The lockdown meant that for years I had to sleep with my daughters, holding them close. I could never sleep alone again: It happened to me in '73, and I slept with them until about '80.

He would wake up suddenly in the night and swear there were gunshots, that kind of thing.

I would watch movies and hug my daughters. Perhaps it was because my partner from Montero and I had to escape amidst the gunfire on the day of the coup. Then came the 17 days in the stadium, and there was gunfire going back and forth.

Things changed when we moved to Viña. But before that, I couldn't be alone in bed.

When the Valech Commission was created, my brother-in-law said to me, "You were imprisoned in the Stadium, why don't you come forward?" However, since I wasn't physically tortured, I felt I didn't have the right to do so. Nevertheless, given his insistence, I went to the Intendencia (local government building), they gave me an appointment, and I told my story. I told the man who attended me, clearly, "I wasn't tortured," and he replied that not everything during the repression involved physical violence. I didn't think they would consider me, so it was a huge surprise to see myself on the list. I was among the first wave. Now I see that, in reality, my detention was a political imprisonment.

Looking back on what I went through, I think it's the least I deserve.

I must say, however, that there are those who lied and made up stories.

"What nerve!" I think. Because of people like this, a bad image has been created, with the innocent paying for the guilty .

I never got involved in politics again; I cut all ties. I participate in groups and activities where I meet with other people, and in a way, it serves as therapy. For example, for about a year now, I've been going to a Tarot reading group at a friend's house. I met her at my job in the park, and after 25 years, I found out she was a high priestess. But I don't go there with the intention of learning anything esoteric, but rather to laugh and have a good time. We're all women, and for me, it's like going to therapy. It's fun because we're all different ages, and this kind of contact is good for you. Another group I go to on Wednesdays is for older people, all very Catholic, although I'm not. Besides that, I have my lifelong group of friends, the ones from Montero who were part of the 21st century.

Of course, we talked about everything that happened with them, because we lived in the same era.

I've lived several lives: the first stage as a young woman, then this political stage, that crazy time between when I separated at 28 and 40; then I came here to Viña, and when I came to Viña and was able to build this house, which I built with a housing subsidy, that's when I said: "Now I have to dedicate myself to other things." Between 1980 and 2005, they flew by, and suddenly I said: "My daughters aren't little girls anymore, I have grown grandchildren, I've finished my working life, when did all this happen?" You just don't really live at that age.

Today, what motivates me is my family, my two daughters, my two grandchildren, and traveling. Just recently, for example, four friends and I arrived from Europe. Nobody could believe that four old ladies were going on a trip! We were there for 40 days, taking a cruise, a plane, a train, and walking all over the place. We had a wonderful time. I'd been planning this trip for three years. I got here, and my daughter wanted us to go to Buenos Aires. I hadn't planned it, but she wanted to go because my granddaughter, who's the apple of my eye, lives there. So we went for 15 days. Money's for spending now, I say, on things that make you happy. I don't buy myself anything new, and I don't let my grandchildren come asking me for designer pants or sneakers. But they can count on me for anything they need to study or to improve their careers.

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87. This ethical dimension is very important for the witnesses, even more so when mechanisms persist in Chilean society that tend to discredit the processes of investigation and reparation for people who were victims of the dictatorship.

I'LL TAKE THOSE HUMAN GESTURES THAT THEY MADE A DIFFERENCE



Lucía Neira Rivas⁸⁸

I met Arsenio when I was 16. My cousin Lili Rivas was studying education, and her class organized a fundraising party. It was at the Café Ópera, across from the Municipal Theater. I went with a chaperone who was studying medicine and was quite liberal. I say "chaperone" because my parents let me go out with him, but I only liked him as a companion. Late that evening, Arsenio came in, I saw him, and I fell in love.

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⁸⁸. This account has been prepared based on the interview conducted by Tamara Vidaurrázaga in Santiago, Chile, on May 28, 2017.

completely of his. "Who is he?" I asked Raúl Iriarte, my cousin Sonia's husband. "Arsenio Poupin," he answered. He was 21 years old and a leader of the FECH⁸⁹.

Then something incredible happened: he came up to me and said, "I'm really bad at dancing, but I could try." It was just one dance, a little waltz, and the rest was conversation.

Everyone left, and the chaperone, who also knew Arsenio, started telling me, "Your mom is going to be mad, let's go!" I left with the two of them on trolleybus 90.

They dropped me off at the door of my house, a small apartment near Bustamante Park. Before saying goodbye, Arsenio asked if he could see me again.

I agreed. We arranged for me to go the next day. I was sleeping with my sister, who is 11 years older than me, and that night, when I arrived, I woke her up: "I've found the man of my life!" I told her.

On the appointed day, I waited for him, all dressed up. Hours passed, and he didn't appear. A great tragedy! The next day I was still devastated. I accompanied my sister to Lourdes, in Quinta Normal. When we returned, my mother told me that a young man had asked on every floor for Lucía Rivas, until he knocked on our door: "Could it be Lucía Neira?" she asked him. She didn't let him in, partly because my father, who was often out of Santiago for work, limited visits; and perhaps also because the "chaperone" had already told her that I had become fascinated with Arsenio, who was a communist and the son of Antonio Poupin, owner of Las Noticias Gráficas, which is like La Cuarta of today.

Shortly after I returned, Arsenio appeared at my door. He apologized for missing our date: since I didn't have a phone, he hadn't been able to let me know he wasn't feeling well. He added to his explanation, "But here I am! Would you like to have coffee with me, or some hot chocolate, or go somewhere?" I loved the idea, yet I declined. He left, and I burst into inconsolable tears.

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89. The Federation of Students of the University of Chile (FECH) is the organization that brings together students enrolled in degree programs at this university. It was founded in 1906, making it one of the first student organizations in Latin America.

90. It refers to trolleybus.

91. Las Noticias Gráficas was a newspaper founded in February 1944. Its first issue (February 8, 1944) was characterized by its "narrative" and "colloquial" writing style, accompanied by "bombastic" and "suggestive" headlines. It circulated until March 1958. See: UDP Press Library (n.d.) "Las Noticias Gráficas: first glimpses of a popular newspaper."

The newspaper La Cuarta, published by the media company Copesa, was published on November 13, 1984. Until 2017 its slogan was: "The popular newspaper of Chile".

A short time later I got hepatitis—I turned as yellow as the chrysanthemum that's in my vase now—and Raúl, Sonia's husband, came to visit. "Arsenio asked about you," he said. Oh, I was still bursting with love! "Tell him to come see me," I replied quickly. And he came! My parents wouldn't let him into my bedroom, so we spoke through the wall. "I hope you get better, Lucía," he said. He left. My mother managed to say, "What a handsome young man!" and I jumped up on the bed and attacked her—I attacked her! I mean it. Fortunately, my sister calmed things down.

After two years of dating, we got married. When we made the decision, Arsenio told me, "I'll marry you and your two little girls." In those days, that was a big deal.

My daughters were five and six years old and a year later our son, Juan Pablo, was born.

I didn't hear from him again until I called him, encouraged by my sister, to sell him some tickets to a school party at the nuns' school. "I'll go!" he said immediately.

We agreed to meet at the FECH entrance – on Alameda Avenue in front of the Library

National—to give them to him. I took a bus that was passing by. I remember clearly what I was wearing.

We were poor at that time: the hairdresser didn't exist for me and I had very few clothes, but I wore my sister's who had more because she worked. I'm on the bus with the tickets in my little purse, I see him at the door—handsome and with his intellectual glasses—the bus passes and I don't get off.

Seven years passed without us seeing each other. In the meantime, I had a boyfriend, not for very long, and then I married Tito, my first husband, with whom we had two little girls: Loreto and Pillar.

We reconnected when I was 23 and had just separated from my partner. I got a job at the Statistics Department, and a friend told me, "Arsenio Poupin works there." What a twist of fate! And there I was, quite the flirt, I won't deny it.

The office was an old house. We'd put out a rather rusty kettle for coffee or tea. He saw me going back and forth to make it. He and his two coworkers never did, because they had a secretary. But that time he came by with the kettle in his hand and stopped at my desk: "You're Lucia, aren't you?" We were destined to be!

After two years of dating, we got married. When we made the decision, Arsenio told me, "I'll marry you and your two little girls," back in those days.

That was a big deal. My daughters were five and six years old, and a year later our son, Juan Pablo, was born. In interviews or conversations, I would say, "I have three children." This was despite the fact that my eldest daughter—Loreto—went to live with her father for a while. We saw her on weekends.

During our eight years of marriage, we lived in a small apartment (two bedrooms, living room, maid's room, and kitchen) on the third floor of a building without an elevator. We always had a maid, and sometimes my mother would come to stay with the children.

Arsenio had studied law at the University of Chile. However, he hadn't graduated. I sensed he was somewhat frustrated about not having finished the process, and one day I told him, "Graduate! If you don't want to practice later, you can just hang your degree." He listened to me. He requested a few months' leave of absence, without pay, to prepare.

All of this was before the Popular Unity government. I had already left the Statistics Department and was working as a secretary in the INDAP prosecutor's office. To help us out financially, I also started selling clothes: a friend of my sister's, who was quite old, would give me coats and dresses on consignment to help me out, and I would sell them. I earned a good amount of money that way. Meanwhile, Arsenio studied and studied. I helped him by asking him questions about the subjects; I still remember some of the material. It was a wonderful time.

He finally took his exam, and I went with him, pregnant, waiting for Pablo. Schaulson, his father, was in the courtroom and told him, "Your exam was brilliant, but we're going to give you two failing grades—not three—because of how long it took you to graduate."

My brother, a lawyer and a right-winger, had also gone to see him and agreed that he had been fantastic. When we left, Arsenio said to me, "Mona, a red one is for you." I was very touched. "Now you can hang up your degree," I told him. He managed to work as a lawyer at the State Defense Council and at a law firm where he was invited by a right-wing lawyer, with whom he became friends.

Then came the Popular Unity government. It was one of the most intense periods of my life. When Allende became President, Adrián Vásquez was appointed Vice President of INDAP, and he called me to be his secretary. A year later, as

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92. National Institute for Agricultural Development.

93. Momio or momia corresponds to a Chilean neologism used to ironically refer to people or institutions of the conservative right.

Then came the Popular Unity.

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When Allende became President, Adrián Vásquez was appointed Vice President of INDAP, and he called me to be his secretary. A year later, around the beginning of 1971, I went to El Teniente as his secretary.

Pedro Valdivieso, who was from MAPU.

At the beginning of 1971, more or less, I went to El Teniente⁹⁴ as a secretary by Pedro Valdivieso who was from MAPU⁹⁵.

But, apart from my work, I was Mrs. Arsène Poupin. He had been a socialist for many years—he was

Communist until I was 17—and I don't know exactly if it was Allende or the Party

He was appointed legal advisor at La Moneda, along with Jorge Arrate as economic advisor. Later, he was appointed Interim Director of the Investigations Police.⁹⁶

Arsenio was quite a character; he could stay working until two or three in the morning. He really came alive at night, but in the mornings, he was a zombie. The phone would start ringing early, around six in the morning, so the nanny—as they call her now—would rush over with the coffees. One of the callers was Payita⁹⁷, who had given him an alarm clock for his birthday: it was so big, so beautiful, and so expressive!

For us, there was a whole life after the office. There were receptions and all sorts of things. For example, Arsenio had accompanied Allende on the tour of

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94. The El Teniente mine was owned by the American company Braden Copper Co. In 1967, during the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva and as part of the "Chileanization of copper," the State acquired 51% of the shares. Simultaneously, the mine was transferred to the company Sociedad Minera El Teniente SA. In 1971, during the government of Salvador Allende, the "Nationalization of copper" process took place, in which the State expropriated all of the shares of Sociedad Minera.

95. The Movement of Popular Unitary Action (MAPU) was a political party that was part of the Popular Unity coalition, and was born after the division in 1961 of the Christian Democratic Party.

96. With the arrival of the Popular Unity government, Arsenio Poupin became Legal Advisor to the Presidential Palace. In August 1972, following an incident involving the Investigations Police (PDI) in the Lo Hermida neighborhood of Santiago, President Allende dismissed the Director General of the Police, Eduardo Paredes Barrientos, and appointed Poupin as interim director.

97. Miria Contreras Bell, "La Payita", was the personal secretary of President Salvador Allende.

South America⁹⁸. Then, in Santiago, several embassies held ceremonies to recognize those who had been part of the trip. This meant participating in the activities. Usually, these events were very elegant and attended by very stuffy people⁹⁹, mostly foreign ministry officials with their wives.

So, it was crazy: Arsenio would rush in to change his tie and get coffee; it was a small space, and the maid would be running back and forth with little coffees. I'd come straight from the office and get dressed quickly. Let me tell you, there were some stunning women there, so I put some effort into getting ready. I've never had much hair, but I used a hairpiece and it looked amazing.

One day I also bought some false eyelashes. I got home from the office and my mom was there with the kids watching TV. "We're running late!" Arsenio told me, so I got ready in a hurry. We were already heading out to the car—we had a Fiat 600—when my mom stopped me: "Lucía, you're only wearing false eyelashes on one eye." I didn't have time to fix it: I took them off right away. They went straight in the trash.

These stories might seem superfluous, but I think they illustrate how stressful that whole period was. Things weren't much calmer at the office either.

The Lieutenant's office was on the street Augustinian nuns. I worked on the third floor, and the Socialist Party had an office on the second floor. This whole building was elegant because it had been a refuge for the Americans (thousands of right-wingers had ended up there! Allende, with his incredible policies, didn't lay a finger on anyone). I was a socialist, and my cell leader and I belonged to a group in Santiago Centro¹⁰⁰—I've completely forgotten its name. The point is, we held our meetings there, and they were quite lively.

And, well, Arsenio and I, each of us had our own activity. Sometimes we saw each other little, but it got harder when he appointed Director of Investigations. Sometimes, he slept in the barracks. He went through an intense period, when Santucho arrived from the Trelew, to guerrilla group in Sant

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⁹⁸. The presidential tour carried out between July and September 1971 included visits to Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru.

⁹⁹. "Momiaza" comes from "momia", which as we already mentioned corresponds to a Chileanism used to ironically refer to people or institutions of the conservative right.

¹⁰⁰. Refers to a kind of political working cell, in this case of the Socialist Party.

I consulted with Arsenio and he thought we were too pointy¹⁰¹, of course, he was calmer.

And the marches, that was another story. I sometimes went with the children. My first husband would get angry because I took Loreto, who was living with him at the time. He had been a leftist. I don't know what happened to him, because he even became a member of the National Party during that period. Funny how things work out! That saved us at some point.

And, well, Arsenio and I each had our own activities. Sometimes we didn't see each other much, but it got more difficult when he was appointed Director of Investigations. Occasionally, he slept at the barracks. He went through an intense period when Santucho, from the Trelew ¹⁰² guerrilla group, arrived in Santiago. Arsenio was supportive, but there were people in the government, and in higher positions, who had a different opinion on the matter. Santucho, perhaps in gratitude, gave him his pistol. And he couldn't think of anything better to give it to than me! We always kept it on the top shelf of the closet in our room. I mention this weapon because, I believe, it was one of the reasons why which led to my arrest.

Shortly before the coup, I got sick. I was never fat, but I was thin, very thin.

The medical team at La Moneda didn't find anything. One of them suggested it could be stress. The psychiatrist agreed and gave me medical leave, recommending I leave Santiago. The chaos at home was tremendous. Among other things, we discovered the military had tapped our phone, and one day they even planted a bomb in our car. It was very complicated. Arsenio was under terrible stress.

My mother had a small farm in the Arauco Province, near Lake Lanalhue, where she lived with one of my brothers. My family was very traditional, with the exception of my brother.

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¹⁰¹. By "puntudos" he means that they were very politically radical according to Arsenio's perspective.

¹⁰². Mario Roberto Santucho was one of the founders and the top leader of the Revolutionary Workers' Party-People's Revolutionary Army (PRT-ERP), an Argentine New Left organization that advocated political-military struggle to achieve socialist revolution. In 1972, along with other members of the PRT-ERP, the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR), and the Montoneros, he attempted a mass escape from Rawson Prison, hijacking an Austral Airlines flight. Those who were recaptured were extrajudicially executed days later, with the public claim that there had been another escape attempt, in what became known as the "Trelew Massacre." Some managed to land in Santiago, Chile, and requested asylum from the Popular Unity government. After several days of deliberation, President Allende decided to allow them to leave for Cuba, thus avoiding handing them over to the de facto government of the military officer Alejandro Agustín Lanusse Gelly.

Sister, the rest were leaning towards fascism. I couldn't go there! Some dear uncles had a farm near ours, because it had all belonged to my grandfather. They weren't exactly leftists, but they were the parents of my two cousins, the only ones who were. There were 36 of us cousins, a huge family!, and only five were leftists: one radical, another close to the Christian left, and the three of us. I asked them if they could take me in. Arsenio sent someone to drive me, because at that time he was already Undersecretary General of the Government and had a car with a driver. My daughter, Pilita, went to live with Sonia and Raúl, who were socialists, and my other daughter, Loreto, stayed with her father. I went with Pablo, who was about four years old. This was

Arsenio, Pilar, Pablo, and I had spent the previous summer there. We took our last picture together there. Loreto usually vacationed with us, but that time, I don't know why, we stayed in Maitencillo where she was with her father.

Arsenio would come on weekends. We talked a lot during those days. He told me that if things got bad and something happened to him—he thought he might be taken prisoner—I should go to Cuba, where we had been in '72. We talked about it, just like that, calmly.

On September 18, 1973, I received a dismissal letter, but that was a minor detail because Arsenio had already disappeared. He was one of the first in history, because he disappeared on September 11, 1973, from La Moneda Palace.

When the coup broke out, it was very difficult. My daughters were still young: Pilita was only 12 years old and Loreto, 13.

On September 18, 1973, I received a dismissal letter, but that was a minor detail because Arsenio had already disappeared. He was one of the first in history, because he disappeared on September 11, 1973, from La Moneda Palace.

Pablo and I were in the countryside. My aunt, Estercita, had told me, "No radio! You need to sleep, to rest." That day, September 11th, I was lying down and Pablo was in the next bed, poor little thing, I remember; and suddenly, Blanca, one of the maids, came in with a small radio in her hands: "Ma'am, ma'am, they're talking about Don Arsenio!" I stood up immediately and Juan Pablo jumped up after me. We all gathered there, even my uncle, who was quite

103. Arsenio Poupin remained in this position until September 11, 1973, the day he was in La Moneda with Salvador Allende.

Deaf. It was Timosis, an Argentinian journalist who worked at ILO104 and had managed to escape to Argentina, speaking. He said that all he knew was that Arsenio Poupin and others had been arrested at La Moneda. What a coincidence that Blanca happened to hear this! She knew Arsenio because, as I said, we had spent the summer there. He was a charismatic, charming fellow, so my aunt and uncle adored him, and the maids too!

We were isolated; no buses were running and there was no phone service. I decided to leave Pablo with my aunt and uncle and walk to Cañete, which was about 25 kilometers away. There wasn't a soul around, and then, out of nowhere, a guy in a beat-up pickup truck came by and gave me a ride.

The previous summer we had been with the Mayor of Cañete, who was a socialist, so I went to his house. I arrived and found his wife, a poor woman, devastated, with three children: he had been taken away and murdered. She lent me her phone and I was able to speak with Sonia, Raúl, and my daughter Pilar. It seems that Tito, my ex-husband, had already taken them to Loreto, so they were all together. They confirmed that Arsenio was nowhere to be found.

I walked back to my aunt and uncle's house. It was a dirt road. A cart took me part of the way. When I arrived, my aunt and Blanca took off my boots, and the skin was peeling off. They washed me with warm water and put bandages on me.

The previous summer we had been with the Mayor of Cañete, who was a socialist, so I went to his house. I arrived and found his wife, a poor woman, devastated, as if she had three children: he had been taken away and murdered.

After a week, the buses slowly started running again. I left Pablo with my uncles and went to Concepción. There I made a phone call: "We don't know anything about Arsenio, nothing!" they told me again.

In a suitcase I carried several Marxist books I'd brought to the countryside to read—I'd have plenty of time in a month! With that load, the cops stopped the bus several times along the way. Classist, of course, they didn't search me. Men with long hair, on the other hand, they made to get off and cut it in the most brutal way. brutal.

I arrived in Concepción, got rid of the books, left them in a bag with the station's security, and took the first train to Santiago. It was packed with DINA agents, absolutely packed! I was the only woman. It was terrifying. I could hear them talking; they were telling horrible stories. They had started torturing people. At one point, I went to get something to eat in the dining car, and one of them said to me, "You're traveling all alone, can I sit with you?" "And you're so mysterious, ma'am?" he asked, half-flirting, half-trying to get something out of me. His face is unforgettable. He was the worst of them; he was conducting interrogations. It seemed he was in the navy, but he was in civil

When we got off the bus in Santiago, there wasn't much traffic, and the guy said to me, "Shall we share a car, ma'am?" On the way, he kept insisting on knowing who I was and where I was going. "Just drop me off here," I said curtly. I've never talked about this before, but it was a terrifying experience. I drove around for a while before finally going to Sonia and Raúl's house, where my children were.

They had hidden someone who was the mayor of some place; they were looking for him, calling him on the radios and everything. The four of us started thinking about how to get Santucho's gun out of my apartment. We were terrified! Because none of us were terrorists. Raúl was an extraordinary guy: "Come on, Lucía!" he told me. There was a curfew, and he came with me to look for it. We came back with the gun and didn't know what to do with it. The four of us were like a hot potato! Finally, late at night, Raúl and this man who was hiding there, with a string it seems, threw it onto the roof next door, where there was a convent. I don't remember the details, but we were scared.

After that, I moved back into my apartment with the three children. Less than a week later, Eliana, the housekeeper we had before the coup, showed up. I explained that I couldn't keep paying her. I was out of work. "Okay, ma'am!" she said curtly, as was her way. She left, but a few days later she returned with a sack of coffee, detergent, and sugar: "Here, ma'am, I heard Don Arsenio isn't here," she said. Her gesture surprised me, because during the Popular Unity government she had always looked at us with a frown. She wasn't a supporter of our ideas. "I'm coming to work with you, to take care of Pablito!" she added. "But Eliana! I don't have any money," I replied. "Leave me alone! You can pay me when you can." This happened before I was imprisoned, and it was deeply moving for me. These kinds of events make me say that not everything in this story is misfortune.

105. Expression to indicate that it is a very difficult situation to handle.

So, as soon as I returned to Santiago, I started looking for Arsenio. The first thing I did was talk to people who might have some influence. I visited the Colombian Ambassador. He had known me for many years, since he came to study in Chile and fell in love with Gladys, a close friend of my sister, whom he married.

We had met at one of the receptions I was accompanying Arsenio to; they got along very well. This gentleman, whose last name was Calle, told me to come with the children: "I offer you my house in Medellín and you can travel directly there."

It's only a matter of time before they arrest you."

Rada106, who had become Acting Director of Investigations after the coup, also recommended that I leave the country. We had met before, when Arsenio appointed him Prefect of Investigations in Santiago; before that, he had been in Valparaíso. He was a nice guy. He received me. He claimed he had no information. Perhaps to appease me, he said, "If you want, you can review the lists we have." He took me to an office, and there I saw list after list of people who had been detained and others who were already dead. It was terrible! There were, I remember clearly, 13-year-old children.

Actually, I knew what happened to Arsenio practically from the beginning, but I never believed it. I never saw his body either, I never saw it! I kept looking for him, turning to these people and also joining the lines that formed outside the National Stadium.

In my efforts, I also called the father of a friend of Arsenio's. This gentleman, who was right-wing and had been the Director of the Carabineros, said he would do everything possible to try to find him. Later, his son told me that he had discovered that Arsenio was no longer alive. In memory of his affection, he...

He offered me money or whatever I needed to leave Chile or, at least, Santiago.

Actually, I knew what happened to Arsenio practically from the beginning, but I never believed it. I never saw his body either, I never saw it! I kept looking for him, asking these people and also

standing in the lines outside the National Stadium. Besides, I heard rumors: that he'd been seen in Antofagasta, for example. I don't know, unbelievable things. And there was a bit of a mess about everything, because

106. Refers to Julio Rada Jiménez, appointed by Arsenio Poupin, when he was Interim Director, as Prefect of Investigations of the Metropolitan Area.

They had gone to look for him at Lake Lanalhue: they raided the house of my aunt and also my brother, in case he had been hiding there.

In the midst of all this, some Dutch people contacted me for an interview. It was at Raúl and Sonia's house, which was on Simón Bolívar Street, at the end of a passageway. And, of course, they came with cameras, and the neighbors got suspicious, because they later raided the house. That was a lead. They asked my cousin who had been there in the last few hours. That's how they got to me. Of course, she couldn't have said anything else.

On October 15, 1973, around three in the afternoon, a patrol car with twelve uniformed officers arrived at my apartment. They raided it, searching everywhere. I had a Cuban machete that had been given to Arsenio, and only the sheath remained; I still have it in the countryside today. A captain was leading the operation—I haven't forgotten his face—and he told me, "Ma'am, you're going to have to come with me." I should mention that they never took away my title of "Ma'am."

I said to Loreto, "Pack me a little bag." And she, who knew how to do things so well, took out my red toiletry bag, from my first marriage, and put in a pair of socks, underwear, my lotion, everything. Juan Pablo was playing at the neighbor's house; he had a little boy the same age. When they were taking me out, he heard the noise.

They tried to stop him, but he got away. Four years old and dressed as a fox, he said, "Mommy, where are you taking her?" Unforgettable, unforgettable moment!

But, here, amidst all this, humor comes in: they bring me out in front of the crowd that had gathered in the street, handcuffed, but with my red briefcase.

They took me to the Military School. While I was there, a man in civilian clothes called me over: "Ma'am, I have to search you." I remember it clearly: he put me behind a screen, "Undress!" he ordered, and I began to do so with enormous, enormous slowness. I didn't get completely naked, because the captain who had arrested me came in, looked around, and said, "The lady is coming with us!" He did arrest me, it's true, but that's how he saved me.

With curfew in place, they put me on a truck. Raúl was lying on the ground, and my cousin Sonia and I were left standing. They took us to the Directorate of Investigations, where Arsenio had been the Director. When Allende appointed him to this position, he told him, "You have *carte blanche*, Arsenio, to clean house," because of the corruption that existed at that time regarding the dollar trade. So, he made some powerful enemies, but also loyal people; perhaps that's why my experience wasn't so negative, compared to other enormously painful ones. In fact, Rada being the Acting Director was providential for me.

Upon arriving at the Investigations Directorate on General Mackenna Street, Raúl and Sonia were immediately taken to a cell. The officer in charge asked me if I was Arsenio's wife. I nodded, and he left me in a hallway: me with my red briefcase, wearing a very nice Montgomery coat, and my hair perfectly styled. I had a hairdresser who came to my house, who I think was also a member of the Popular Unity coalition, so that day, I don't know why, I was dressed to the nines. There were two women and two men lying on the floor, handcuffed, beaten, and all. And I heard one of them say, "And who is this one? Who is she?! And with the briefcase!" "The queen of cocaine," the other replied, with a barely suppressed laugh. And one of them reprimanded them: "Shut up! She's Arsenio Poupin's wife." These four people on the floor were also socialists. Later, I was detained with them¹⁰⁷, we became friends and we still laugh about this anecdote of the cocaine queen to this day.

As a favor, the manager in charge let me sit in the waiting room with him. They brought me coffee constantly, but I saw and heard everything that happened in that place. I wish I hadn't!

The next morning, with the shift change, a soldier arrived. After asking who I was, he sent me to the holding cell. That's where I ended up with all my future friends. The cell was packed, absolutely packed; we had to take turns sitting down. We were there for about two

The next morning, with the shift change, a soldier arrived. After asking who I was, he sent me to the brig. That's where I ended up with all my future friends. The cell was packed, absolutely packed; we had to take turns sitting down.

We were there for about two days. They interrogated us. While I waited my turn, I looked through the cell bars and thought about the times I had walked that same corridor hand in hand with Arsenio: "Life is full of surprises!" I told myself. I was thinking about that when

Someone, suddenly and furiously, crushed my head against the bars while he told me

Swearing. The guy would have kept going, but Rada waiked in. He was a detective, angry because Arsenio had demoted him or something. Rada apologized to

me and asked someone to interrogate me. They asked me, without touching me, if I had been to Cuba and what I had done there.

107. These women were Nuria Núñez and Ximena George-Nascimento, who also collaborated as interviewees for this research. During the conversations, both recalled this same anecdote.

My first husband, Tito, managed to find out where we were and brought us sandwiches. We divided them up among all the female prisoners in the cell; I think there was even a woman with a neck among us. We were completely crammed together, and what can I say about the men! That part was tough. Then, at the National Stadium, they started other routines.

Tito had also moved into the house with the three children. I think they tried to raid their home several times, but he showed them his National Party membership card, which protected them. Later, some of Arsenio's uncles took Juan Pablo with them.

On October 17th, more or less, we were put into vans to be taken to the National Stadium. When I was in line to get in, a detective approached me: "Ma'am, who should I notify?" "Give me a phone." That kind of thing is unforgettable.

On October 17th, more or less, we They got into vans to take us away to the National Stadium. When he was While waiting in line to board, a detective approaches me: "Ma'am, who should I notify?" "Give me a phone." That kind of thing is unforgettable. And that's because nobody I would know where our families were we would be.

When we arrived at the stadium, they took our picture: that photograph of us as criminals, front and profile, was the first humiliation. After that, they led us to the locker rooms, in the pool area. They were like a tunnel, I remember, very cold, freezing. There were a lot of women. I don't know exactly how many there were, but if the capacity was 100, there were 200. We were all crammed together. I remember that in front of me there was a poor woman who looked very tortured, her face completely bruised.

It was a rather cold October and the conditions were very harsh. In fact, we slept on the bare floor several nights, without blankets. Later they brought some sleeping mats.

They took roll call every night and morning. Around six or seven in the evening, they locked us up. During the day, though, we could go out. I walked a lot along the edge of the pool; sometimes Ximena¹⁰⁸ and I walked together. The truth is, I've been a walker all my life, but there it was a way to let off steam and cope with everything that was happening.

108. Refers to Ximena George-Nascimento.

In the mornings we did gymnastics, and those of us who could stand it went to shower with the freezing cold water. I remember that Isabel Miranda¹⁰⁹ and I would come out purple after each shower.

A soldier, a young lad, would come to distribute the food: hard beans, sautéed pieces of meat, watery stews with a horrible taste. I've never forgotten that taste. They say, though I haven't found out, that they added firestone to tame it, like a sedative, you know.

One day I saw my ex-husband from afar with a friend of mine who were on Grecia Avenue. We were guarded by young conscripts, and I said to one of them, "Could you send me this little note?" What I asked for, my friends remember, is also funny: a lettuce. I was so craving something like that, because they never gave us raw vegetables, not even parsley. It was always bread and soups that tasted like rocks, so a lettuce was a marvel! The lettuce arrived, and then some cream and little notes from my mom.

Later, Tito would bring the girls and Juan Pablo, and one of the guards would come and signal to me; I could approach and touch their little hands. These soldiers knew that if they were caught helping us, it could cost them dearly, but they did it anyway.

I was at the stadium for about a month. I don't think I ever changed my clothes during that whole time. Luckily, I had an extra pair of underwear: Loreto put them in the "coke queen's" bag. I was the only one who arrived with a bag—how could it not be hilarious!

One night, late, around midnight, someone approached the entrance to the dressing room and shouted, "Lucía Neira!" A total silence fell over the prisoners. I thought, "They're going to kill me." I went outside. An officer with glasses was waiting for me, and behind him were two boys. He spoke to me softly, barely opening his lips: "I'm Alamiro's brother" (my unit leader at El Teniente), "I'm in charge of the stadium, count me in." Later, when I was released, he came to see me and told me the most horrifying things he saw there. He was discharged and went to Argentina, returning to Chile after many years.

109. Luisa Isabel Miranda Alarcón, arrested at the National Stadium and later transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility. In the list of detainees at the latter, which appeared in the 1974 United Nations (UN) Report, she is listed as Isabel Miranda Alarcón.

I also remember once when we were taken for questioning at the stadium itself¹¹⁰. They had us lined up, and I heard from the stands: "Lucía! Lucía!" Lucía Lorsch, another detained comrade, looked up and said to me, "It has to be you." It was Adrián Vásquez, a socialist, my friend and boss at INDAP. I saw him and excitedly left the line. He ran down and handed me a crumpled pack of cigarettes. A minute later, the cop came and beat him with his rifle butt. Years later, we met again in Mexico, where he had settled.

I wasn't tortured at the stadium either. A detective interrogated me. He asked about my "activities," and I reiterated what they already knew: my attendance at the marches, which, as I understand it, they had documented, even with photographs. After my statements, he concluded: "Ma'am, you're already known." During the process, however, a soldier opened the door and said arrogantly, "And who is this pretty lady?" Thank goodness I didn't fall into his hands! Upon hearing that I was Arsenio Poupin's wife, he left. Some time later I learned that Rada, worried about me, arranged for me to be interrogated by detectives, not soldiers.

I wasn't tortured at the stadium either. A detective interrogated me. He asked about my "activities," and I emphasized what they already knew: my attendance at the marches, which, as I understand it, they had documented, even with photographs. After the statements, he concluded: "Madam, you are a market vendor."

That's exactly what happened. I'm telling you this, and I don't want to sound privileged, but things just happened that way for me. Other women endured terrible experiences of detention and torture. In my case, the most painful thing was the loss of Arsenio and the irreparable pain and wound it left on my son. When he was little, he asked Raúl, after he was released, "Why do all the other dads come back,

Incidentally, being detained wasn't like being in a French convent, but I've tried to hold on to the human gestures and attitudes that emerged at different times and that warmed my soul a little. I cherish, for example, that I made some very dear friends there, friends I still keep in touch with today.

.....
¹¹⁰. It refers to the coliseum, that is to say, the area where the football field and the stands are located.

¹¹¹. This refers to Lucy Lortsch, a writer and historian. And as already mentioned, her name is spelled with variations.

And it was at the stadium that we got closer to each other among the prisoners. There was María Teresa Wedelles, who was expecting a baby, Fanny Navarro, Ximena, Nuria, Monique, María Isabel, among others. Also Elena Gálvez, who was a doctor, and the two daughters of Palestro, the congressman.

I remember one day, Fanny delighted us with her a cappella tangos. It was lovely. She had a beautiful voice. Even the soldiers sang along! I talked to her a lot. She also came from Investigations and had arrived at the holding cell after me. She and her husband were actors; they were on their way to Argentina and were taken off the bus. She looked so cute in her beautiful fur coat, splashing around in her shoes without laces, because they took them from all of us. I don't know what happened, but she never made it to the correctional facility.

In total, I
I was there for three months
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They were released
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Actually, in the
The stadium was more
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The one from jail was
The longest one. I
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Some very special
things happened.

Talking with some of my comrades, I learned that people had been tortured in the locker rooms before I arrived. I think it was for an anniversary of Che Guevara's death,¹¹⁵ among them Elsitá. She was only 20 years old and they arrested her. She was coming from her brother's house; he was a MAPU leader who had been arrested and asked her to remove incriminating documents from there. She asked a neighbor, young like her, for help. They were on their way, and he was so nervous that he almost ran a red light. Unfortunately for them, there was a cop, he stopped them and found all those things. He was sent to the Penitentiary and she to the Stadium.

In total, I was detained for three months. I was released on January 15, 1974. Actually, my time in the stadium was rather short. My time in jail was the longest. I remember it for that reason, and also because some very special things happened there.

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¹¹². Monique was Monica Hermosilla Jordens, also confined in the Stadium and later in the Correctional Facility.

¹¹³. Dr. Laura Elena Gálvez was detained at the National Stadium and later also transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility.

¹¹⁴. Alludes to Sandra and Sonia Palestro.

¹¹⁵. Ernesto Guevara, known as Che Guevara, was an Argentine physician, politician, guerrilla fighter, writer, journalist, and revolutionary. He was one of the ideologues and commanders of the Cuban Revolution. He died on October 9, 1967, in Bolivia while attempting to wage a guerrilla war.

We arrived there with Nuria, Ximena, Elsitá, Isabel Miranda, and two doctors, one of whom was a socialist and the niece of Lucía Hiriart,¹¹⁶ whose husband had tried to take the children away from her at that time. María Teresa Welledes and the group of teachers from Buin were also there.¹¹⁷ We crammed into a bedroom. The bathrooms were disgusting, and we found the most incredible things in the stained mattresses, like hidden needles, for example. We formed groups to clean so we could live there.

There was a small cement patio, and another one made entirely of dirt, with an abandoned ping-pong table. We used to knit there. Nuria was a beautiful knitter, so she helped me. Well, actually she made Pablo a sweater with a car on it that was wonderful.

There were different tables for eating, but Ximena, Nuria, María Teresa, Isabel, and Cecilia—"Condorito"¹¹⁸—and I ate together. The food was a little better than at the stadium; it was made by two common inmates: one was a con artist and the other a mugger named Margarita.

The cook set up "The Table of the Cool Girls" for us, because Nuria and Ximena were getting lots of delicious things: the first strawberries, the first ears of corn, chocolates, you name it, everything. Meanwhile, I only got cans of condensed milk and hair dye. Margarita, the kitchen assistant, and I had the same hair color: we both had short hair, I dyed mine and she used the rest of the dye.

Tuesdays and Fridays were visiting days. However, there were some people no one came to see, especially those who weren't from Santiago. I remember that, particularly on New Year's Day, some people were very depressed, very unwell. I must also admit that there were political problems between groups. Some of them were young and harbored a lot of resentment. I stayed out of these things; I didn't get involved.

.....
^{116.} Lucía Hiriart was the wife of Augusto Pinochet, the coup-plotting general who led the dictatorial Governing Junta for over 17 years. This niece could be Mónica García Hiriart, who appears on the lists of detainees from the National Stadium and the Women's Correctional Prison. On the latter list, compiled in 1974, she is listed as Mónica García Hiriart. The reference to her relationship—niece—to Lucía Hiriart was not made by other interviewees participating in this investigation, nor were we able to find any further information on this matter.

^{117.} These teachers were part of the group of teachers from the Consolidated School of Buin, arrested on October 10, 1973. First they were taken to the detention center in Cerro Chena and then transferred to the National Stadium.

^{118.} This refers to María Cecilia Yáñez, who was also detained in the National Stadium and in the Women's Correctional Facility and was known among the detainees as "La Condorito" or "La Condoro".

While we were there, we put on a play to lift spirits. During rehearsals, some of the "actresses" got a little too cocky, but we managed to perform it anyway. The premise was that we were on a train to somewhere. Isabel Miranda dressed up as a soldier, and I played a prostitute, all made up and wearing a little skirt someone lent me that didn't cover anything. It was fantastic! We made a lot of people laugh, even the nuns. At the end, Monique, a charming Chilean-Belgian woman, did a striptease: with great grace, she removed layer after layer of clothing, never ending up completely naked, while singing "Les Feuilles Mortes" in French.

She worked at the Alliance Française and was arrested for bringing people into the French Embassy, pretending they were going to dances and parties.

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many shared their
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into mutual acquaintances.
We also held contests
to have a laugh: "Who has
had the most boyfriends?",
"Who has had sex in the
strangest place or way?", or
we chose beauty queens.

We weren't tortured in prison. Some of them had been tortured before, including, as I said, Elsitá, who was given a life sentence.

Crazy! In the end, he managed to go to Sweden, where he stayed.

She and others didn't sit with us at "The Cool Girls' Table," but we would get together to chat in the patio, around the ping-pong table. In those spaces, many shared their personal stories and a number of intimate things. In the middle of the conversation,

Sometimes we would run into acquaintances in
It was common. We also had contests to have a laugh: "Who's had the most boyfriends?", "Who's had sex in the weirdest place or way?", or we'd choose beauty queens. We had a volleyball team, or maybe a basketball team? I don't remember exactly, but we'd go play against the regular inmates.

I used to play, so I remember several matches.

With those kinds of activities we tried to make the lockdown and the uncertainty.

.....
119. Expression to say that they regretted it at the last minute.

120. Monique was Mónica Hermosilla Jordens, who was held in the Stadium and later in La Correccional and who is remembered in several of the stories presented.

All these things were happening while we were being watched by 17- and 18-year-old boys doing their military service. They were on the walls surrounding the courtyards and in the tower, from where everything was monitored.

In the Correctional Facility there was a Carabineros Officer who treated me very well. She gave permission, for example, for Juan Pablo to visit me, and she arranged that with the nuns. Tito, my ex-husband, took him, along with Arsenio's uncle, Rodolfo Poupin, who was a very good friend of mine. Everything was organized so that Juan Pablo didn't see the other prisoners, or the bars, only me, his mother.

"Madam, you are free without charges." "Without charges?" I replied, "and who will give me back these three months?" I said this because it was true, but I felt an overwhelming happiness. It was a hot day, and I was wearing a hat to shield myself from the sun. Having said this, I headed toward the gate that granted me my freedom. You can't imagine what that was like—what

It was this same officer who informed me on January 15, 1974: "Madam, you are free without charges." "Without charges?" I replied, "and who will give me back these three months?" I said this because it was true, but I felt an overwhelming happiness. It was a hot day, and I was wearing a little hat to shield myself from the sun. Having said that, I headed toward the gate that would grant me my freedom. You can't imagine what that was like—what joy! When they saw me, the two guards in the booth shouted, "Where are you going?!" "I'm free, I'm free!" I replied. They left their posts, took me by the arm, and led me back. That was incredible. The prosecutor came out and told them I could collect my things because I was free.

In the afternoon, Rodolfo and Tito came to pick me up. I left with my red toiletry bag. My friends said goodbye with tears and messages: "Call my grandmother," "Call my boyfriend," and so on. I've

never forgotten one young woman who took off her precious ring and gave it to me; unfortunately, I lost it while living in Sweden.

Around three in the afternoon I arrived at my apartment. The children were waiting for me: my sister, Alamiro—my family leader who, fortunately, hadn't been arrested because he was the brother of a military officer—and Tito. After looking around the place carefully, I said to my sister, "What happened to the house? Why is the ceiling so low?" And she replied, surprisingly funny, "It's because you grew up, Lucia."

After a few days spent running errands for my colleagues, I went to the countryside, to the house where I was when the coup happened. I stayed there for a while with the three children. I visited my mother, of course.

When she saw me, she said in surprise, "Where were you imprisoned? You're fatter than ever!" And it was true! "The Table of the Cool Girls" was stocked with the best by the girls' parents.

My brother Jorge, may he rest in peace, had told my mother, "If Lucía comes, I'm leaving." "Then you're leaving!" she replied. My other brother, the second oldest—who was also a lawyer and who rose to a high position at the State Bank during Pinochet's regime—behaved better: while I was in jail, he sent word that he would take charge of Juan Pablo's education. My older brother's wife, also quite reserved, tried to reach out to him many times. She said that Arsenio had always been a very good person to her.

Meanwhile, a lawyer who had worked with Arsenio at the General Secretariat of the Government, and who had already visited me in prison, came to see me. He told me that the Swedish Ambassador was offering me the opportunity to go to Sweden with a letter from an organization and without needing to go through the embassy. He was the Ambassador who had remained after Edelstan, who had been declared *persona non grata*.¹²¹ And, of course, I was the only wife of someone with a position of Arsenio's level who was imprisoned, at least during the time I was incarcerated.

He then organized a lunch at his house, to which he also invited another woman whose husband had disappeared: Isabel Chadwick, wife of Claudio Gimeno, also an acquaintance of Arsenio's. She was younger than me and had two small children. We were both offered support to go to Sweden, and she said to me, "Let's go together."

I thought, "It's cold there all year round. She's a biologist; she'll leave with a degree and a job. Unlike me, who will probably have to bake cookies or remove screws, who knows what." Despite that, I answered yes, that we should go for a while.

Also present at that dinner was a doctor who had lived in Sweden for two years on a scholarship. Based on his experience, he wanted to dissuade us from traveling there. In his opinion, it was hell, the epitome of human coldness, which he illustrated with a series of stories. And it turns out that, a few days after this, Isabel regretted it: "It terrified me," she told me, and she didn't leave.

121. Gustaf Harald Edelstan was a Swedish diplomat and ambassador who, in the context of Augusto Pinochet's 1973 coup, rescued and protected numerous political refugees.

I left with the three children. Tito didn't want to authorize our departure, but between incense burners and conversations with friends, we convinced him. We arrived at a shelter and were quickly assigned a house to share with a socialist couple and their child. Shortly after, during routine medical exams, they found I had typhus, encapsulated in gallstones. I went from prison to exile and from there to the infectious diseases hospital, where I had surgery.

I took Juan Pablo to the hospital. He stayed with me for about three days, and then Pilar and Loreto took care of their brother. They had a whole support network. There were three Swedish social workers, and I became very close to two of them. One of them, sadly, is no longer with us, but the other—Marina—is still one of my best friends. She was with me during the operation and was in charge if something happened to me and the children had to return to Chile.

My children and I experienced the tremendous solidarity of the Swedish people and all the other people, of our colleagues. There was Marina, the assistant, Alejandro, a Mexican who was an interpreter, a great friend, and also two Bolivian women. In short, there were extraordinary people near us.

There were three of us Chilean refugees hospitalized: a boy from Temuco who had been hanging and having his kidneys beaten, he did not resist, he died; a girl who had had glass inserted into her uterus; and me, who was in the infectious diseases ward.

My children and I experienced tremendous solidarity. From the Swedish people and all the people, from my colleagues. There was Marina, the assistant, Alejandro, a Mexican who was an interpreter, a great friend, and In short, there were extraordinary people nearby our.

The Chilean exiles came to visit us in groups, arriving by bus. I didn't even know some of them. None of them spoke the language, and to see me they were required to wear masks, a yellow suit buttoned up in the back, and plastic galoshes over their shoes.

I was in the hospital for about a month. I was terribly hungry there because there was so little food, and I was already feeling better. Then, a communist boy would bring me a sausage hidden in a briefcase. There was also a very dear friend who, when everyone else left, would stay with me, wearing his cape and galoshes.

Even though they removed the stones from my kidneys, they wanted to prevent me from infecting other people. They gave us a small house just for us. When I had the opportunity to go to Stockholm with my children, to this place provided by the Swedish state, Alejandro, the interpreter, asked for permission from his job and went with a friend of his, the son of a refugee, to help me assemble the furniture and get everything ready.

Then the Swedes did something incredible: they gave me the opportunity to spend a year without having to enter the job market, studying the language to better integrate into society. During that time, however, through a Brazilian interpreter I had, I started working summers cleaning in a hospital.

After that, I took a nursing assistant course there. I supported myself with that until I studied Bilingual Early Childhood Education for two and a half years at Stockholm University.

In exile, I continued my activism for a while. In fact, many of the meetings were held at my house. However, certain behaviors began that I didn't like. They interfered a lot in my life, and the fact that I had been Arsenio's wife seemed to give them a certain right. There was sexism there. That's how it was.

I can't deny it.

This kind of thing was precisely one of the reasons I didn't go to Cuba. As I said, I had been there in '72, when Arsenio was Secretary General of the Government. They had received me in that capacity, so I knew what it would be like. Going to Germany never even crossed my mind: they offered it to me when I was already in Sweden. That country was surprisingly supportive.

In the midst of all that, I met a Swede, fell in love with him, and he came to Chile with me when I returned. His name was Leif Björqvist, and we were together for nine years.

He wasn't an intellectual or anything, but a worker, a builder with great ideas.

With him, I built a lovely little house out in the countryside. We had a wonderful time together.

After Arsenio disappeared, I never wanted to get married again, not to the Swede, not to anyone. I've been asked so many times, "Why not, Lucia?"

And, in truth, I believe that therein lies one of the greatest impacts in my life: the death of my son, which was undoubtedly due in large part to the trauma caused by his father's disappearance at the same time as mine¹²², which also played a role

122. Juan Pablo Poupin Neira disappeared in Sweden in June 1999, and his lifeless body was found a year and seven months later in Lake Mälaren. He was suffering from depression and was only 30 years old.

in my other daughters. After that, something dried up inside me forever, as if I could no longer love. That's why, at times, I'm surprised that I still maintain some family and friendship relationships. This shows me a capacity to give that I still have, doesn't it? But the other stuff is painful for me.

And maybe that's precisely why people don't ask, I don't know. But also sometimes, when I talk about Pablo or Arsenio, which I do quite naturally, people, including my sister, just stare at the ceiling. That hurts me deeply. I'd much rather they confront me and tell me they want to focus on my glamorous side, which also exists in some way, and that the pain is just too much for them.

It wasn't, and still isn't, easy for me to talk about what I went through and what all these experiences have meant. The interview that gave rise to this account presented me with this challenge. It's been a long time since I've addressed these issues, perhaps since I testified before the Rettig Commission. Juan Pablo accompanied me, and we both gave our testimonies. Afterward, at what used to be the INP (National Penitentiary Institute), a human rights lawyer met with me and said, "You know, Lucía, I've been reading your file, and I was truly impressed," something like that. However, my account hasn't been one of terror; I'm sure of it. I've tried to distance myself from that.

It wasn't and hasn't been easy.
For me, it's about talking
about what I've lived through
and what all these experiences
have meant. The interview from
which this story emerged
presented me with this
challenge. It's been a long time.
It's been a while since I've touched
on these topics, perhaps
since I testified for the Valech
Report.

Today, I feel like my life is "all right": I'm a frugal person who doesn't need more than what I have. If you ask me what motivates me to keep living today, I say...

123. The National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation was created in 1990 by President Patricio Aylwin Azócar to contribute to the truth about the serious human rights violations committed during the Military Dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet (September 11, 1973–March 11, 1990). The commission was chaired by the jurist and politician Raúl Rettig, which is why it is popularly known as the Rettig Commission, and its findings as the Rettig Report, which produced a list of 2,296 people executed and forcibly disappeared during the recent dictatorship period, as recognized by this Commission.

124. Institute of Pension Standardization.

Today, I feel like my life is
"all right": I'm a frugal
person who doesn't
need more than what I
have. If you ask me what
keeps me going today, I say
literature. Writing, for example,
is one of those things. I've
done workshops.

I love it.

Literature. Writing, for example, is one of those
things. I've done workshops. I love it.

Although I was published while I was in a workshop
with Pía Barros¹²⁵, and some of my stories have
received honorable mentions

I've received honorable mentions in some
competitions, but I think I need to be more daring about publishing

I have a novel finished. However, writing it caused
me so much pain that I think publishing it will
destroy me, which is why I've put it off. But besides
writing, I'm an avid reader. So I'm getting by,
spending time in Sweden and other times in Chile,
always with my novel under my arm.

"The one the rifles are pointing at"¹²⁶

To the political prisoners

"Sir, sir," said the voice muffled by the black rags with two holes at eye
level covering his head.

Young legs emerging from a tiny skirt.

Other voices joined in from the wall, forming a female chorus in that
foggy, fearful October. The officer, one of those olive-skinned men, rifle
in hand, his hoarse voice turning to velvet: "If you want to urinate, my
dear young ladies and respected women, go ahead. I'm eager to see
communist, MIR, and socialist backsides. Come on, pee in front of me.
I'm waiting... we're all waiting."

.....
¹²⁵. Feminist writer, known especially for her short stories. She belongs to the so-called 80s generation.

¹²⁶. Story by Lucía Neira Rivas, who gave it this title after a poem belonging to Teresa Calderón.

It was cold, and the black hoods made it even colder that morning, which had begun at six o'clock, with a long and uncertain walk from the gymnasium to the stadium's velodrome. Although the sun hadn't appeared—perhaps it never would again—the stiffness in their limbs and the urge to use the restroom told the line of women in front of the wall that they had been there for many hours.

—I signed up as a volunteer just to check out their “butts,” I specifically requested a transfer from Punta Arenas to the National Stadium. So, with the jeans pulled down, “comrades,” it's time to pee—.

The gray-haired woman had come there from other places, always with the bandage on. Just discovering that this last place was full of women, some like her and already without bandages, healed bruises and wounds, but not her urinary tract infection. I had sublimated the need to urinate.

Thinking about how she had saved her son, who was probably already in some embassy, about her lively-eyed granddaughter, about the colorful garden of those family summers at her house in the north. How had she resisted her urgent desires? Perhaps a miracle, even if her bladder burst into pieces. She heard the silky rustling of clothes, the cascading jets carving furrows in the sandy ground of the enclosure. The sound, the

The smell was too much for his well-trained muscles. He heard her say, “I need a bathroom. Officer, please take me,” the words catching in her throat, almost a sob. “Oh no! I like well-worn asses too, of course, ‘free love militants, comrade,’ so drop your pants and don't play dumb, you've surely shown them before, haven't you?” The woman, turning toward the voice and clearing her eyes, spoke in a clear voice: “You will take me to the bathroom or you will have to kill me here and now and carry my death with you for the rest of your life.” The officer, bewildered, aware of the total expectation of that group of silent women and the recruits who guarded the place with their rifles

Frozen in suspense and as if turned to stone, he assessed it for a second and, hesitating, barely in a whisper, ordered: –take her away, but cover her face–.

The woman walked with a soldier on each side to the toilets, and while they waited outside, she closed the door and urinated slowly and leisurely.

As she left, she carried her hood in her hand, her undone bun falling over her haughty shoulders. Slowly, she walked past, looking each guard in the eye. Her dark, penetrating gaze lingered on the officer, then she returned to the other women, her face to the wall, her hands raised, just as they had been before.

THERE IS ONE EVERYWHERE A PERSON WHO DARES AND IN MY WORK I DARED



María Garreaud Muñoz¹²⁷

I got married in 1947. I was married for thirteen years. My husband had nothing to do with politics; he was an ordinary postal worker, without any great aspirations either. In 1960, he got a heart condition and died. I was left with four children and had to face life alone. This event could have turned me

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¹²⁷. This account was compiled from two sources: an interview conducted by Isidora Salinas on June 20, 2018, in Santiago, Chile, and the account written by María Garreaud herself about her experience of detention in the National Stadium from September 19 to October 20, 1973, which is identified in italics. This is because María is 93 years old and her memory sometimes fails. We do not know the date on which this account was written, but it is after 2004, the year recorded in the diary where the manuscript is located.

in a bitter woman. However, things happen to me and I forget them. Actually, I never forget them completely; I just look ahead.

We buried him on Saturday, and by Monday I was already looking for work. My children were still young: María was eleven, Esteban ten, Paty nine, and Cristina eight. I hadn't finished my humanities studies and, therefore, didn't have a profession.

I didn't have any money either. The post office gave me some money, about fourteen thousand pesos, which I used to live on. During that time, my sister Lelia helped me a lot. She had two sons and a daughter, Leonardo, Darío, and Lelia, and she took Esteban to live with her. She looked after him during the week and bought him the things he needed, like clothes, for example.

I couldn't think of anything better to do than open a laundromat. I really didn't have much experience running a business, so it didn't go very well. However, I managed to hold my own for a while and then sold it. In any case, I learned the trade well there. Through all the people I'd met while running my business, I heard they needed an employee for another laundromat. I applied and they hired me right away because I knew how things worked. They made me the manager.

It belonged to the Sepúlveda family and was located across the street from the LAN Chile offices. In fact, They were our customers.

From the laundromat, I went to work at LAN Chile¹²⁸. I got there without any political connections, nothing. The bosses liked some work I did and offered me a job. This change suited me because it paid better and offered better working conditions than I had at the time. I accepted, although I thought about it quite a bit at first, because the owner of the laundromat was also a widow and a wonderful person.

At LAN Chile I was in charge of the in-flight service linens, which included all the items carried on the plane, napkins, blankets and all that stuff.

I had to keep these things ready and spotless.

While I was there, I worked quietly. But, I have a bit of a leadership quality in me.

When I was in school, I was always the one who led or "carried the tambourine"

128. LAN Chile was founded in 1929. In 1932, it obtained its legal status as the National Airline, dedicated to the commercialization and transport of passengers. In the 1980s, within the framework of the economic reforms of Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship, the Military Junta decided to privatize it. Thus, in 1983, the company became a limited liability company; and two years later, a public limited company, under the name Línea Aérea Nacional Chile SA (National Airline Chile SA).

And there at LAN I became a group leader. I never tried to stand out or make history; I just liked to participate. I've always been driven by justice and human interest, and so some things outraged me. But I haven't gotten involved in politics. never.

I was in the union and in those years it was like an obligation to be part of it. They'd tell me, "You work here and in the union." However, I never went to a meeting and always made excuses. At that time, I was dating a coworker. He was the second-in-command of maintenance and had previously been a detective. I laughed because my coworkers had elected me as the delegate for the union's welfare department. I'd talk to him about it, and he'd say, "Well, if you like getting involved in that stuff." "But they elected me," I'd reply. And the truth is, I hadn't done much to become a representative: I never presented any work; I just attended the meetings and then reported back to my coworkers.

And of course, in less than 24 hours life can change, it can take a 180-degree turn. At that moment, the country's political situation was very turbulent. I had a job and regular financial stability, compared to my unstable job in previous years.

Tuesday, September 11, 1973, dawned bright and sunny. However, it would soon be overshadowed by tragic events and the bloodshed that would stain our country. I left Providencia to go to work accompanied by my daughter Cristina, then 21 years old and doing her internship at the offices of the LAN Chile Union.

I worked as an employee in the Welfare Department of the same institution. Public transportation was scarce. We would wait for someone kind-hearted to give us a ride to Plaza Italia, where we would catch the company bus that took us to the offices in Cerrillos.

I didn't listen to the radio that morning, and the streets we traveled along, our usual route, were unremarkable. However, upon arriving at the building, we officials had to get off the bus and hand over our ID cards.

By then the atmosphere was very tense and the radio stations were talking about what was happening.

Upon entering the Welfare Office, there was a great commotion: everyone knew about the coup against Salvador Allende's government. Everything was conjecture, doubt, and unanswered questions.

I didn't listen to the radio that morning, and the streets we drove along, our usual route, seemed unremarkable. However, when we arrived at the building, we officials had to get off the bus and hand over our ID cards. By then, the atmosphere was very tense, and the radio stations were reporting on what was happening.

answers. The fact of handing over the ID at the gates had already been a worrying sign.

The radio station that was working was already giving orders and announcements, and we learned that, indeed, it was a military coup.

With this in mind, we cleared the desks of left-wing and right-wing propaganda, because previously the climate in the country was confusing and filled with all kinds of government and opposition demonstrations.

In downtown Santiago, there was total chaos. Planes were flying so low they were practically skimming the buildings. Our proximity to Cerrillos Airport and the Chilean Air Force's Group 7 confirmed that the activity was greater than usual. Seeing all this, we were ordered to return home. But how could we get there?

My son Esteban, an accounting clerk at the company, had his daughter Carlita in a LAN daycare. Fortunately, he didn't take her that day because she had a doctor's appointment, and we managed to get in touch by phone so that Mily, my daughter-in-law, wouldn't have to leave the house.

The roof of the LAN Chile building in Cerrillos was swarming with snipers. Bullets were whizzing past our heads. It was terrifying. My daughter Cristina, who was doing her internship as a union secretary in an office attached to the building, came out to join me so we could go home. A bullet grazed her; luckily, a colleague of mine pushed her to the ground, and the projectile lodged in the wall instead of hitting her. If he hadn't done that, she would have been the first casualty inside that building.

They arranged for us to get on the buses to drop us off as close to home as possible. We arrived around two in the afternoon, tired, sad, and scared. We had lunch and took a nap. When we woke up, we learned that Salvador Allende had committed suicide in La Moneda, which had been bombed. The shock was immense. Cristina and I cried for a long time. Even now, I get emotional seeing pictures of Allende. I carry him in my heart.

A curfew was decreed at six in the evening, which wasn't lifted until the morning of the 13th. At midnight, with no news of anyone and fear clinging to their every move.

We went out into the hallway of the apartment where we lived in Providencia, on the twelfth floor, and threw down a bunch of books we had on politics, plus a miner's helmet that a boyfriend had given Cristina. Everything landed in the back gardens of the building. Like slippery mice, we went back to the apartment.

On the 11th, around three in the afternoon, we heard an announcement summoning many people to report to the nearest police station, among them Mario Céspedes, my brother-in-law. He left his house and didn't make it to the radio station where he was supposed to work. He went to his mother Sara Gutiérrez's house, said goodbye, and then went to the Recoleta police station. With a clear conscience and clean hands, he didn't feel that his ideas were crimes. From there, they took him in a police van to the Ministry of Defense. On the way, along Estado Street at the corner of Moneda Street, they were attacked by snipers positioned in the buildings.

The bus was full of detainees, and the police officers lined them up in front of the windows for their own protection. It was a massacre; luckily, one of the officers knew Mario and made him lie on the ground, which saved him. They arrived at the Ministry, were left in the basement, and the next day were transferred to the Chile Stadium, which is now called Víctor Jara Stadium .

On the twelfth, it was my saint's day. We just looked out the window at Providencia and saw military patrols go by and Ambulances. The news on television They were all broadcast by the new authorities, just like the radio stations where They issued proclamations with orders. We had nothing. phone, so we spent a day isolated from everything.

On the thirteenth, I went down to the street. We were in front of the Providencia market; they broke down the doors, and we rushed in to loot because we had nothing to eat. Almost everyone

We arrived around two in the afternoon, tired, sad, and scared.

We had lunch and took a nap. When we woke up, we learned that Salvador Allende had committed suicide in La Moneda, which had been bombed.

The impact was great. Cristina and I cried for a long time. Even now, I get emotional seeing pictures of Allende. I carry him in my heart.

.....
129. The Chile Stadium was inaugurated in 1949. In 2003 it was renamed Víctor Jara Stadium, as a tribute to the singer-songwriter who was tortured and murdered by Army soldiers in one of the dressing rooms of this venue, a few days after the coup d'état of September 11, 1973.

The old women who came in were like mummies, but they were more thieving than a field cat. I was a moderate leftist: I stole a loaf of bread, a whole sausage, and a stalk of celery.

Desperate because we hadn't heard from the rest of the family, we started walking from Providencia, around the 16,000 block, to Recoleta, to my son Esteban's house. They weren't there, so we continued on to Lircay Street, where my daughter María lived. She was with her two-month-old son, Martín, at the home of the Morenos, her in-laws, who were neighbors. Panchín, her husband, hadn't appeared since the 11th and no one knew where he was. He returned on the 15th, but he never told me his story.

On the way back, always walking, Esteban, Mily, and Carlita and I came to Providencia and stayed there until we went to work on Monday the 17th. That day, Esteban, Cristina, and I left with apprehension, since we didn't know what was happening at LAN Chile. At the entrance, we again had to leave our ID cards at the reception desk. Cristina didn't go in because she was doing her internship at the union office, which was attached to the main building. Esteban and I each went to our own offices. Everything was uncertain, news was whispered about, and above all, we were panicked about what would happen.

At eleven in the morning Esteban arrived at the Welfare office, where I worked, and said to me: "Mom is on a list, what could it be for?" The poor man looked haggard. "I don't know, son," I told him. He reiterated that they were calling several people over the loudspeaker, including me and Valeria Encina, who was the social worker and also my friend, about 10 years younger than me. I never participated in demonstrations, marches, or protests. With a clear conscience, I informed my boss, and he accompanied us to find out what was going on.

They were calling us in to give statements. And Esteban said to me, "Mom, what are you going to do?" "What am I going to do? I have to go, son." I was so calm because, as they say, those who have nothing to hide have nothing to fear. I had nothing to hide; I was just an ordinary civil servant. In fact, for a long time I've wondered why I ended up detained at the stadium. I can't find an explanation for it. I never joined or was a member of any political party, I never went to any meetings. However, I have been a union member; I've always enjoyed it.

They were calling us to give a statement. And Esteban says to me, "Mom, what are you going to do?" "What am I going to do? I have to go, son." I was so calm because, as they say, he who has nothing to hide has nothing to fear. I didn't have anything to hide; I was an ordinary civil servant.

I defended my coworkers. I don't like discrimination, so I spoke up. Everywhere you go, there's someone who dares to speak out, and in my jobs, I was one of them. Without meaning to, I've been a bit of a leader.

Inside the LAN terminal, there were several company buses carrying employees from different departments. Before we boarded, some men in civilian clothes asked us questions.

After that, we had to wait. Then Valeria and I were informed that we would be taken to Group 7 of the Chilean Air Force to give statements. This group was located...

Between the LAN offices and the Cerrillos airport. I was thinking, "What am I going to say?" I didn't know anything, not about subversive movements or meetings. I even remember that on the Saturday or Sunday before the coup, my sister had come to my house, and although she was very quiet, she knew more about politics than I did. I had asked her to teach me, to tell me about it because she had more experience. We had agreed to meet during the week to learn something.

We couldn't talk to anyone; there were queues to get to a window. where they recruited us And they would ask us new questions: "Who did you vote for in the elections?", "What channel do you watch on TV?", "Where do you buy bread if there is a shortage of

I got on the bus, as calm as I was innocent.

We left the LAN terminal. They didn't tell us anything, but the bus didn't go to Group 7; instead, it headed towards Santiago along Ñuble Street. Valeria saw this and said to me, "Let's go to the National Stadium." Mrs. Maria." I had no idea where we were going.

They were carrying them, but I told her, "No, child." I didn't think, but I wasn't afraid either.

We arrived at the stadium around two in the afternoon. I had seen it full of people on television.

We were arrested, but I never thought I'd be just another one of them. They lined us up and searched our clothes and bodies, just like in the movies. They checked us over. They gave us back our IDs and left us to be interrogated.

There were hundreds of people like us. From LAN, there were more than 100 of us. They made us sit on the floor, starving. They interrogated us one by one: What did we do? What was our job? What were our activities? The questions were accompanied by punches, kicks, and scribbles. Terror had already taken hold of us. We couldn't talk to anyone; there were lines to get to a window where they took our information and asked us more questions: "Who did you vote for in the elections?" "What channel do you watch on TV?" "Where do you buy bread if there's a shortage of everything?"

When they heard my name, they were struck by my French surname. Several times they asked me why I had that surname. I have it because my grandfather was French, but I never met him. The only image I have of him is from the single photograph that was in the house. My grandmother and I had two children and never married. She was a theater artist and sang zarzuela, and in those years theater people were looked down upon, kind of, with a certain air of superiority.¹³⁰ I told this story and played the "Huasteca"¹³¹ so they wouldn't bother me anymore. They didn't say anything to me, they just kept taking notes. I don't remember anything else coming out.

My father wasn't Chilean either. Since my grandmother was an artist, she was pregnant and gave birth while she was in that country. When I was little, I was teased because he was Peruvian by birth. However, he didn't even know Peru. He also hadn't gotten involved in politics. He didn't like it, and perhaps he passed that on to me a little.

While we waited, some soldiers walked around and told us, "Report everything you know so they don't beat you, and you can go home." They kept us there all day. I saw my brother-in-law, Mario Céspedes, from a distance. When he saw me, he thought the whole family was there, but a LAN employee who knew us both explained to him, to put his mind at ease, that I was coming from work.

Night fell, and they took us to some rooms behind the gallery. There, sitting on the floor, we spent the longest, most agonizing hours of my life. It was pitch black, and we could hear the groans of the beaten detainees. We were terrified that if we moved, the soldiers would come and point their weapons at us or hit us with the butts of their guns.

In this chaos, there was no water or anything to eat; I was still eating the previous morning's breakfast. To go to the bathroom, you had to ask a soldier to accompany you and not close the door. We couldn't drink the water because there were rumors it might be poisoned. And so it went until morning arrived. Valeria gave me half a glass of coffee and a cookie that I don't know where she got it from. I managed a sip, and next to me, a pregnant girl was fainting from hunger, so I gave her my breakfast and continued as before.

In these conditions, lying on the ground, dozing and hungry, the whole group spent the 18th and 19th. The LAN colleagues tried to stay close together, that gave us a little peace of mind.

.....
^{130.} It refers to the fact that they looked at her with contempt.

^{131.} It refers to huasa, meaning that she played innocent.

Already in the locker rooms
We were able to go into the
bathrooms and do a quick
wash, while we kept
The door was open and the
soldier was behind it, always pointing his
We slept in those
dressing rooms and on the
20th in the morning they finally gave us
something to eat: a pot of coffee
and a roll , which we
found to have the best taste.

On the afternoon of the 19th, the men and women were separated and taken to some changing rooms. Some women from the Red Cross gave us a tiny towel, a bar of soap, a toothbrush, and toothpaste—all Venezuelan according to the labels. Once in the changing rooms, we were able to go into the bathrooms and give ourselves a quick wash, keeping the door open and the soldier behind us, always with his gun pointed. We slept in those changing rooms, and on the morning of the 20th, they finally gave us something to eat: a pot of coffee and a roll, which we found to have the best taste. We had to eat little by little, because we hadn't eaten anything for three days.

We spent several days like that. For breakfast, they gave us coffee with milk, to which they added "alum stone," according to the soldiers, to inhibit sexual desire. As if we were in the mood for anything! They moved us from one place to another in the stadium, and around 4 p.m. they handed out a portion of beans and a piece of bread. We spoke in hushed tones; no one felt comfortable talking because, they said, there was

On several occasions, they took us out of the locker rooms in groups of about 20 people. They lined us up in a circle, and a hooded man with a blanket that had two holes through it stood in front of each of us for several minutes, staring intently. Whoever he indicated was pulled aside and taken to another place.

We never saw those people again. I knew a neighbor, a young student who lived on Robles Street in Recoleta. His father was a lawyer, humble people. The young man was killed, just like everyone else the hooded man pointed out.

At night, between midnight and 5 a.m., there were cries of anguish and gunshots. I reckon that's when they were killing people, because afterwards you could hear trucks leaving.

After wandering through all sectors of the Stadium, always surrounded by soldiers with rifles ready to fire and treated like a flock of sheep, night fell

.....
132. It refers to a type of bread.

And we would settle down on the floor of the changing room to sleep. These doors would open two or three times a night to receive more detainees who arrived in groups of 30 or 40 at a time. There was no more room. People from all walks of life arrived: camp dwellers, office workers, doctors, nurses, teachers, you name it.

There was no distinction, we were all criminals to the military, all "terrorists".

Some were so badly beaten that they were complaining.

I remember a man whose arm had been broken; pieces of bleeding flesh hung between his hand and elbow. Among those detained was Dr. Ella Palma, who proceeded to make a kind of splint. I took off my petticoat, tore it, and gave her a piece of fabric to bandage his arm. It was my first traumatic experience of the violence. There was no care or mercy for anyone; if you complained, they mocked you or hit you with rifle butts.

Things I will never forget.

Certainly, each person had their own story, but we shared the bewilderment: What future did we have there?

There was talk of PLAN Z134. They said they had convinced conscripts and some gullible civilians that on September 19th, the day of the Military Parade in Cousiño Park, the entire area would be mined and the whole ellipse would explode, with the terrible consequences that this would entail. It was a way of showing how perverse the UP135 were. However, nobody believed this, only those who benefited from it to justify the coup.

There were a lot of foreigners—Uruguayans, Ecuadorians, Argentinians, Colombians, Venezuelans. What were they doing here in Chile? I don't know, but they arrived at the stadium. The venue was huge. I don't think the military ever knew how many people they arrested.

.....
133. We cannot clearly read the name that Maria puts in her account, but we believe that it may be Ella Palma who is on the lists of prisoners, although she does not appear as a doctor and there is no further information about her.

134. Plan Zeta is the name attributed to the alleged plan by Salvador Allende's government to instigate an armed insurrection, a self-coup, and thus impose a Marxist government. This hypothetical plan was disseminated by the military officers who perpetrated the 1973 coup d'état to justify it. However, declassified CIA files and their own authors have demonstrated that it never existed and that it was fabricated as a psychological warfare strategy by the Chilean military, imposing the "us or them" logic to justify the repression and human rights violations of the civic-military dictatorship.

135. UP, as an abbreviation for Popular Unity, was frequently used to refer to the government and its left-wing supporters. Strictly speaking, Popular Unity was the coalition of left-wing parties that supported Salvador Allende's candidacy and, after his election (in 1970), his term as President of the country.

There were a lot
of foreigners: Uruguayans,
Ecuadorians, Argentinians,
Colombians,
Venezuelans.
What were they
doing here?

Chile? I don't know, but
they arrived at the
stadium. The venue's
capacity was enormous. I think
The military never knew
how many people they
arrested.

After several days they separated us: the men to the stadium grounds and the women to the pool area, towards Pedro de Valdivia Street. There, things started to change somewhat, because there were closer relationships among the detainees.

From LAN Chile, there were only three women there. A woman who worked in an office in Cerrillos, who I later learned committed suicide when she was released: her husband had been shot.

Her husband, and her two young daughters, had already been taken to Argentina by a sister. Unable to bear so much misfortune, she ended her life. The other detainee was Valeria Encina, a social worker and granddaughter of the historian Francisco Encina, a member of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). And I, a social welfare employee, had become involved in union activities of a professional, not political, nature.

The days passed slowly, and each one held a surprise. Early in the morning, the soldiers would arrive with a list of people to give statements and would take them to other facilities.

They returned beaten, humiliated, and hungry. The women gathered around those most affected, but no one said anything. There was fear of infiltrators.

Once, a soldier asked me where I was from, what group, district, or neighborhood. I told him I worked for LAN Chile and that's how they'd brought me to the stadium. He decided to ask me why there were losses even when the planes were full. I explained that I worked in the Personnel Welfare Department. Since he demanded a concrete answer, I told him I'd make one up. He got angry and slapped me across the face so hard my ear was ringing. I couldn't resist, so I just said, "Hit me again and pretend I'm your mother." He turned red, bit his lip, and turned away.

It was the only attack I suffered.

I was uncertain: What was happening outside? What was happening to my family? How long would this detention last? I saw people arriving at the stadium, but no one

I went out. I met Uruguayan girls who lived in La Remodelación San Borja¹³⁶ .

They thought they wouldn't get out alive; one of them even gave me the keys to her apartment for when I was released. She told me she had a lot of dollars sewn into the hems of her skirts and inside the linings of her jackets. I took the keys, dug a hole in a planter by the pool, and buried them. I never heard from the Uruguayan women or about the loot again.

A Brazilian woman arrived who had been taken from her apartment at midnight, along with her husband. They put her in the patrol car, and her five-year-old daughter ran after the vehicle in the middle of the street. Later we learned that someone rescued her and took her home. Her name was Roberta. This poor woman's anguish was immense. Luckily, there was a social worker from the Air Force, but she was on our side, who, after many days, located the girl and informed her. But her misfortune didn't end there. Her Brazilian husband, a human rights lawyer in his country, was very ill and died in the stadium. They notified her one afternoon, gave her his ID and watch. In her desperation, she threw herself at the soldiers on guard, begging them to kill her. Thankfully, they were young conscripts and were as shaken as all the detainees.

Every day like
At three in the
afternoon a kind of tank
would appear and
they would arrive with large
pots of beans.
It was our lunch.
Each one had to
have her own plate
with her own spoon
and she had to use it,
wash it and put it away

We slept in the pool changing rooms. There was a sort of locker there, where we put our clothes and slept half-sitting up, freezing cold. Fortunately,

I had a thick coat, I had just bought it, they were fashionable so I
He took great care. The days passed slowly.

Every morning when I woke up I looked at the ceiling and I was faced with the sad reality of being

I was trapped in that place without explanation or reason, only with the fear of not knowing what the day would bring. Around eight o'clock, I had to take an icy shower, with traces of soap still on it.

¹³⁶. It is a complex of high-rise buildings located in the central area of the city of Santiago, between Alameda Bernardo O'Higgins Avenue (north), Vicuña Mackenna Avenue (east), and Marín Street (south) and Lira Street (west). It was planned during the government of Eduardo Frei Montalva, with construction beginning in 1969. Its name comes from its proximity, at that time, to the San Borja Hospital (in 1977 the hospital moved to the Avenida Matta area, and the old building was demolished).

We would pass them around. After that, we'd wear the same clothes. One day I'd wear panties, and the next day briefs, so I could wash one item of clothing a day, but some of my coworkers had nothing left that fit them. My shoes were worn out; after more than a month of wearing them, they were just flip-flops that were hard to keep on.

Every day around three in the afternoon, a kind of tank would appear, and they would arrive with large pots of beans. It was our lunch. Each of us had to have our own plate and spoon, and we had to use it, wash it, and put it away.

During the day, we hung out outside, by the pool. Once, I slipped while walking along the side of it. Luckily, I didn't fall in because the water was rotten and smelled awful. I twisted my ankle and couldn't walk for almost a week. My teammates would take me outside the locker room, and I spent the day sitting down. One time, they took me to the infirmary, which was a tent right there in the stadium. I found out that the head officer was a big military woman named Alfa Gutiérrez Hunt. She was the daughter of the assistant principal of High School Number 4, where I had studied. She recognized me. She asked about my brother-in-law, Mario Céspedes. I told her he was in jail, and then, when she wanted to know about my sister, Leila, I told her she had died in March. I think if I hadn't told her this, they would have pressured me to reveal her whereabouts.

From the dressing room we had a view of the street. That's where we could see those who were going to see us: at least if they saw us, it meant we were still alive. I have memories of Cristina, Esteban, Mily, María, Carlita, and Martín; the latter two were babies, seven and five months old. I'll never forget the time we were looking toward Avenida Grecia and one of the women in our group suddenly ran off toward the fence. Her husband had had the bad idea of taking the little girl right up to the fence. It was a nightmare! The mother was crying, the girl, the father, and eventually, all of us. Those crucial moments were very emotional.

Despite all the hardship and hunger, some humor remained. In the afternoons, before they locked us up, there was a theater performance, a show. One day a cart arrived with clothes.

Despite all the hardship
and hunger, some
humor remained. In
the afternoons, before
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A car arrived with
used clothes—skirts,
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Of those arrested,
a Spanish teacher
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Used clothes, skirts, blouses and vests, and we divided them up, making use of what we could. On that occasion, one of the detainees, a Spanish teacher, invented a fashion show. They had to find a way to distract themselves.

I used to talk a lot with a woman who was the daughter of a doctor and with an older woman who, I imagine, must be dead by now. She was a teachers' union leader; her name was Mercedes. We talked about everyday things. I think there was a photo on the cover of Ercilla magazine, titled "Women at the Stadium." It showed us with Mercedes, in the front row, coming down from the stadium stands to where we slept. My sister saw it in Costa Rica, where she went to live with her husband. I don't know if a friend or someone else lent her the newspaper, but I was in it. The photo didn't have names on it. I don't know if I still have that page.

While at the stadium, I also ran into a gynecologist named Lila Coronel, who was also detained. It was a very special encounter. When I worked in the LAN welfare office at Compañía and Teatinos, I wrote referrals for medical consultations. Without knowing her, I referred patients to her and her husband, Dr. Ramírez, a cardiologist. She was intrigued to know who this María Garreaud was who was sending her so many patients.

There were some doctors who had been brought out of Barros Luco Hospital in their work aprons; they were freezing. There was even a pregnant midwife who was sleeping on the floor. Later I learned that she had her baby, and my granddaughter Carlita was her classmate at Manuel de Salas School.

While we were detained, we experienced three earthquakes. The terrible thing was staying calm because if we tried to leave, they would surely shoot us. The days passed in this routine, 33 in total. The hunger, the cold, the fear were finally overcome. I hope no one in my family ever has to go through an experience like this.

There were two detainees who slept together; they were said to be lesbians, but they received different treatment. That night

They were given ham and drinks, and they could go to the bathroom without being escorted by a soldier. We always had our doubts about them, wondering if they were infiltrators. But I, who slept near them, never heard them speak.

While we were detained,

There were three earthquakes; the terrible thing was to stay calm because if we tried to go out, they would surely shoot us. The days passed in this routine, 33 in total, and hunger set in.

The cold and the fear were finally overcome. I hope no one in my family ever has to go through an experience like this. The soldiers were ferocious in the war of the armed against the defenseless. What happened there was paltry compared to what occurred in other places.

After about 25 days, people started coming out. The soldiers would arrive with a list, call out three or four names, and take them away. We didn't know if they were released or disappeared. Before, they would make them give statements, and they would come back desperate and beaten. Back then, we didn't know anything because they didn't talk; they couldn't because they were threatened. But one day it was my turn, and I was released.

So much time has passed that there are things I don't want to remember. I think that hurt my children deeply; they suffered the most. I was never afraid, I never thought about death or that they were going to execute me. The thing is, I don't cry. He who has nothing to hide has nothing to fear, as I said before. I wasn't afraid during the interrogations either, because they would ask me things like, "Were you in this area?" and I would tell them no. And it was true that I hadn't. I had nothing to do with it. Now, in those places, they treated us all the same: we were all "lazybones."

When I got out, I didn't maintain any of my friendships. Since becoming a widow many years before, I had dedicated myself to working and managing the household. I didn't even keep in touch with Valeria, whom I had known before and with whom I shared those 33 days of confinement. I had no chance of returning to my job because they wouldn't take me back after my arrest.

Perhaps being at the National Stadium helped me to emphasize the distance I had from political parties. However, after experiencing that, I became a very, very left-wing woman.

They hurt me, but they couldn't have destroyed my soul. That's untouchable.



Oriana Aravena Aguirre¹³⁷

I fell ill when I was thirteen. I was bedridden for four months. My father saved me: the old man came home so happy one day because he had managed to get me the Streptomycin that relieved my illness, that cured the tuberculous pleurisy in my left lung. How much did he spend?! How much did it cost him to get it?!

With so much time spent sick and recovering, it was understandable that I repeated a grade. My classmates moved on to the next level, and I didn't want to stay at the high school where I was. My mother had been at a teacher training college in Serena, and so she

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¹³⁷. This account draws on interviews conducted by Andrea Pequeño in Buin on May 25 and June 5, 2018, supplemented by extracts from a personal account (in italics) written by Oriana about her experience of detention, which was read in the first interview.

The idea of putting me in one here in Santiago, in Recoleta, occurred to her. Bad idea for her; she was more formal, more conservative, and had no political affiliation.

I learned many things at that school. They took me to the camps, I saw the poverty, I saw how people suffered. In my student teaching, I started teaching in Conchalí, which at that time was very agricultural, and one day I told my students: "Tomorrow, cleanliness check."

The next day I arrived early and they were washing their little feet in a basin of freezing water and cleaning their nails with a nail. They were walking with their shoes on their backs, I don't know how far, so as not to get them dirty. I thought, "My God! How could I not have noticed?" When I got home I told my father, and two days later he arrived with a box full of nail clippers, towels, everything for me to take to the children, like the elementary school teachers did.

When I began to see and become aware of all these things, and to participate with humble people, with everyone, I started to feel closer to the left. I was the daughter of a middle-class family, with a more or less comfortable economic situation. My father, a Freemason, a radical, and a firefighter, was educating my sister and me—not without effort—at university. I had a home full of love, tenderness, and protection.

I only left there to marry a professional and calm man.

In 1968 we already had our first child and we went to live in Central America.

My husband was a psychologist and had found a good job in El Salvador. Our second child was also born there. We returned to Chile in early 1971.

However, before I left, I had already become involved with the Communist Party as a sympathizer.

A friend who was a psychologist and also worked at a school had encouraged me to do so.

Once I returned to the country, I resumed my work as a teacher and counselor at a high school in San Miguel, the district where my husband also worked. Allende's rise to the presidency was a beautiful dream. I mention it and the images come flooding back.

Allende's arrival to the presidency was a very beautiful dream.

I mention it and images race through my head: going out to the Streets, singing – "and you will come, marching beside me..." –; and all those things. We dreamed so much!

I also became an emissary
for the Unified National
School. They trained some
psychologists, and I liked
it so much that I accepted the
job.
They sent us to meetings at
different schools.

In my head: going out into the streets, singing –
“and you will come, marching beside me...”¹³⁸
–; and all those things. We dreamed so much!

I also became an emissary of the Unified National
School.¹³⁹ We

They trained some psychologists and I liked it so
much that I accepted the job.

They sent us to meetings in different places
schools. He presented the project, which had
been taken and adapted from the German

experience; he explained how excellent it was and how it was going to work.

I spoke with parent-teacher associations, and I remember there were some terrible arguments,
because the initial goals were social in nature: they wanted to create a socially responsible man.
I won't go into detail, as it would take too long, but in any case, I was a total supporter! If a child
studied plumbing, what did it matter if they went on to university? Even if they didn't get in, at
least they'd have a specialization. And, of course, for some, it was degrading for their children to
study electricity, plumbing, or mechanics. "How could the son of 'so-and-so' the manager work
in that field?!"

Well, by going from place to place, I became quite well-known. I think that was one of the reasons
I was arrested. Also, when the coup happened, I was an outspoken communist. I had just joined
the Party—that

.....
138. The Internationale is considered a representative song of the labor movement, of workers, and of most
socialist and communist parties. It was written in 1871 by Eugène Pottier, as part of his work *Revolutionary
Songs*. In 1888, Pierre Degeyter set it to music. The composition is the official anthem of the Second
International, also known as the Socialist International.

139. The measures surrounding the Unified National School (ENU) “proposed a National System of Lifelong
Learning,” aimed at “all individuals” and “at all levels,” involving both “regular” and “extracurricular”
education. In the former, the focus was on “general, polytechnic, and professional training.” The latter, for
its part, was directed at the out-of-school population, as well as those “with extraordinary or special needs.”

The ENU Project quickly aroused “great opposition”: “The Catholic Church and the military were the first
to react. However, the fatal blow came from sectors of the Chilean right wing, who mobilized their student
forces—led by the student unions of the Catholic University with Jaime Guzmán at the helm—to confront
the new project championed by the Popular Unity coalition in pursuit of a substantive change to the elitist
reality of Chilean education. After numerous incidents and marches both for and against the project, the
discussion of the project was finally suspended.”

It's called "bad luck"—140, it would take four or five months. During that time, my husband and I went to meetings and they told us that we had to prepare, that something big was coming; that if we had anything with which to defend ourselves, we should defend ourselves.

But with what? With a broomstick? We didn't know when, but we knew something would happen. The "tank attack" had come first. It was something that hung in the air.

On September 11th I was in San Miguel, at the high school where I worked.

We were in a teachers' meeting when a colleague came running up, completely pale, and said, "Please listen to this!" We started listening to the radio.

"What do we do?" we asked. "The session is suspended. Everyone go home! The children should leave; we don't know what's going to happen," the principal said. The children had to get to different places; they were from different neighborhoods, and they left right away. At that moment, they were bombing La Moneda Palace. My husband called me on the school phone and said he was coming to pick me up. "Okay!" I said. Before we left, the radio started broadcasting Allende's last speech. I remember we were all crying, hugging each other, sobbing, sniffing and everything: "The great avenues will open, a day will come..."¹⁴². And they haven't opened since. It was a dream.

We had a small, white Fiat. The road we traveled home was so terrible. In San Miguel, there were dead bodies in the streets. The factories of the industrial belt were in that area, and some resisted, they defended themselves. There was blood. Suddenly we would hear bang! bang! bang! bang! Gunfire, then a response from

.....
140. Colloquial expression meaning "bad luck".

141. The military uprising against the Popular Unity (UP) government of President Salvador Allende is known as the "Tanquetazo" or "Tancazo." It occurred on June 29, 1973, and was led by Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper of the 2nd Armored Regiment.

142. This refers to Salvador Allende's memorable last speech, delivered over Radio Magallanes before it was bombed on September 11, 1973, in which he stated in part: "Workers of my country, I have faith in Chile and its destiny. Other men will overcome this dark and bitter moment in which treason seeks to prevail. Know that, sooner rather than later, the great avenues will open again for free men to walk, to build a better society. Long live Chile! Long live the people! Long live the workers!"

143. This refers to the San Joaquín Industrial Belt. The industrial belts were conceived as an expression of "people's power." They emerged during the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970–1973) as a collective reaction by factory workers to the "boycott" and "destabilization" actions promoted by the opposition to the Popular Unity government. Each belt was made up of a group of industries in the same geographical area. By the time of the coup d'état of September 1973, there were 31 belts throughout the country.

Gunshots. "Get down, get inside. The children are small, one of us has to survive," he would tell me. When he saw so much destruction in the streets, so many wounded people, he would tell me: "Don't get up yet."

Over the years, I've thought about our arrest. And, what's more, we were the ones accused. We lived on a dead-end street behind the California Theater, on Irrazaval Avenue, and the men in the neighborhood were getting together to figure out how to defend the condominium. They started forming a group to "protect themselves" from the people "who were going to come after us," because "the poor are in revolt." And my husband went to the meetings. I told him not to, that it wasn't a good idea, but men are so stubborn: "They're going to ask you which side you're on, and you can't say right now."

He, however, insisted that he had to defend us—me, the children, and my mother, who lived next door with an 82-year-old great-aunt. Later, a cousin of mine, who had grown up with me and was a sailor, found out about this from my mother. She told him, and he said that my husband, being a leftist, was infiltrating right-wing conversations and that he would warn Dr. Aravena, the neighbor who was organizing the "defense" group and who also worked in the air force.

Then he accused us. The betrayals of that time were terrible!

They came to get us on October 1, 1973. That day my whole world changed. At five in the morning, the tanks arrived on our street. The sound of soldiers' boots echoed through the garden. Then, there were kicks to the front door, and the awful clatter of heels on the stairs to the second floor. My husband and I went out in our pajamas to meet them.

- What's happening?

- You can't tell them. Get dressed, you're under arrest!

- Where are they taking us?

- It is not known.

They came to get us on October 1, 1973. That day my whole world changed. At five in the morning, the tanks arrived on our street. The sound of soldiers' boots echoed through the garden of the house. Then, a few kicks to the front door, and the horrible clattering of heels up the stairs to the second floor.

We were immediately separated: my husband on the ground floor and me in the upstairs bathroom with the door half-closed, while I got dressed. I felt a pain in my chest and a great anguish. I was afraid the children would see us being taken away with our hands up and then be left alone. I prayed so much that they wouldn't wake up, and that's exactly what happened. I asked permission to say goodbye to them. I took the opportunity to go to my room and took a small bag from the dresser containing four or five pieces of jewelry that I had kept since my childhood, family heirlooms. I gently approached my eldest son's bed, who was six at the time, and placed the bag under his pillow. I stroked his hair and my youngest son's, who was three. I looked at them deeply, trying to etch them in my memory, and said goodbye. I believed I would never see them again, which is why I left the bag under their pillows, so they would have something to hold onto if a relative took them in.

They took us out into the street. There, my heart told me to ask my mother, who lived next door with my great-aunt, for help. They let me. When I knocked on the door, my aunt looked out a window. She became so nervous upon hearing the noise and seeing the soldiers positioned with machine guns that she couldn't open it. I shouted to the soldiers not to shoot, that it was an elderly woman inside. When they saw me, they both came out. My mother, 65 years old at the time, was so pale that I was afraid she would faint. I hugged her tightly and told her not to abandon the children and that I loved her very much.

The armored vehicles surrounded the place. There were more comrades from the sector. The men were forced into the back of a kind of pickup truck, their hands behind their heads, lying face down on the floor. All this amidst shouts and blows to their ribs with rifle butts. I was put in the front, after being asked, "Your ideology?" "Left-wing," I answered. That answer sealed my fate.

We arrived at the Telecommunications Regiment on Antonio Varas Street. They made us get out of the vehicle amidst shouts and blows from rifle butts. We began to be taken in one by one for interrogation. They made me stand in front of a flag from that time, which must have been six in the morning, until noon; without permission to sit down, and without anything. While I was there, I could hear the screams of those being interrogated. My interrogation was short and without any beatings. Afterward, they sent me to the National Stadium with the rest of the group. By then, I was so cold my feet were numb.

Upon arriving at the stadium, my husband and I came face to face. That was the most unspoken look we ever shared. We both thought we would be executed, so we said goodbye with that look. They took us to the tunnels. There, I was standing again, and now I needed to lean against a column for support. I asked permission to sit down, but they refused, laughing as they checked on the detainees in front of me.

When we arrived at the stadium, my husband and I came face to face. It was the most unspoken look we've ever. We both thought they would shoot us, so we said goodbye in it.

They unzipped their pants and checked their genitals, everything! If I tried to turn away so I wouldn't see, they yelled at me. So I decided to look each of them straight in the eyes.

While we were there, they separated my husband and me. I waited for hours. The only thing that scared me was the pain they could cause me until I died.

"I don't know what will happen here," I thought, "I hope it doesn't hurt too much. A firing squad is at least..." fast".

Just then, a group of prisoners approached with a large pot of coffee with milk. A worker who had been leading them, guarded by a tall soldier, handed me a tin mug of hot coffee. As he did so, his hand squeezed mine fraternally. It was the most delicious coffee I've ever had. Where could that comrade be?
How can I thank him for that gesture?

After that came the obligatory search, in an enclosed space, in case I had any weapons concealed on my body: a soldier's hands ran over my chest, stomach, between my legs, all with his back to me. I felt degraded, treated like a criminal. I had never experienced anything like it in my life. At that moment, I think, I came down from my daze and saw how dirty the floor was. Curiously, the soldier who was inspecting me said, "Here's a pencil. Look in your pockets for any papers and write down your name and a number. I'll let you know where you are."

After the search was completed and I handed him the paper, he opened the door and shouted, "To the locker room with the prisoner!" It's surprising, but there was still room for human decency. My mother would later tell me that someone called her to tell her where I was. He didn't say who it was, just gave her the information and hung up. That's why she later went to the stadium to find out about me.

A soldier approached quickly. I left that room and started walking with the young guard behind me. He asked me, "Do you know where the changing rooms are? I'm from Antofagasta and I'm doing my military service here." I felt like showing him the exit doors, or perhaps I would have laughed out loud if I hadn't been in so much pain inside, but I told him to ask another soldier. On the way, he asked someone of higher rank who, laughing, showed him the changing rooms next to the pool, saying, "That's where 'the harem' is." That's what they called it, "the harem." Along the way, I saw the tunnels, the ones the soccer players use to enter the field: I saw male comrades standing behind closed gates.

I arrived at the dressing room that faced the exit. From the stadium to Greece, just as they were handing out snacks in tin cans. I sat by the pool. I didn't want to wait in line to receive it.

A colleague came over, hugged me, and stroked my back. My tears, held back for so many hours, streamed down my face.

behind bars, with scars on their backs and faces that showed signs of being up all night, of beatings, of everything.

I arrived at the dressing room that faced the exit of the Stadium, towards Greece, just as they were handing out a snack in tin mugs.

I sat down by the pool. I didn't want to wait in line to greet him. A colleague came over, hugged me, and stroked my back. My tears, held back for so many hours, streamed down my face.

"You must get in line and receive your ration.

"If you don't want her, there are pregnant women who need her," he told me. I understood the message, dried my tears, and ate the only food ration of the day. It was 3 or 4 p.m. on that first day in prison.

A few hours later it began to get dark, and they lined us up for headcount, a routine that would continue

the same way for the next few days, at dawn and dusk. We would be their 30 or 40 women in that changing room. Then they would lock us in, with a guard at the door. We slept on the floor, on gym mats, which we stacked together to fit more people: four people on just two of them, usually two at the head and two at the foot. Space was such an issue that to turn over we had to wake the person next to us. We only had one thin blanket for four people. Since we didn't have any pajamas, we slept in our underwear. They kept the light on; they never turned it off.

The bathrooms were communal, and some toilets didn't have doors. The sinks and showers were broken and leaked day and night. We had no soap, towels, or detergent to clean them. When the Red Cross gave us cigarettes, we collected the ashes for that purpose. Near the end of my stay, they gave us soap—one blue and one half-white—which, I understand, were disinfectants. We took great care of them, as we used them to wash our clothes, since our T-shirts and blouses served as towels.

The soap was also used to sculpt a chess set that we played with. I think it was made by two women who were isolated in one of the dampest sections of the place. It was a very small space, like a cage, next to the changing room where we slept; it might have been an old shower. They didn't leave for a week, neither day nor night. What was their sin? One of them was a doctor and the other a nurse, and they checked on us when necessary and requested medicine from the Red Cross. The problem was that the doctor confronted the doctor who came with the military. She reprimanded him harshly for the way we were living: with nothing more than a small ration of food a day and two bowls of coffee with milk, even though there were pregnant women among us. She also complained about the dampness, the cold, and the cramped quarters where we slept. That was enough. They locked her up. She was a doctor from the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), I don't know her name, but she was tall, thin, with very dark hair. The nurse

There's so much to tell about each day's experience. Our days began at 7 or 8 in the morning, when we were woken with coffee, and lasted until 6 p.m., when we were locked in. During the day, the locker room doors remained open; we went in and out because the bathroom was inside. Many of us women were young, menstruating, and had to wash because there were no sanitary napkins or wipes. Later, the Red Cross distributed them to us, and we built up a stock to share: we could use one napkin a day. They also gave us lemons; we cut them into pieces—one piece for each of us—and ate them for the Vitamin C.

During those hours we walked
around the pool, and
we were trying to get closer to the
The bars. Our relatives, who had already
discovered we were prisoners, would
reach through them with clothes and food
for us, calling out our names. Of course,
they weren't allowed to give us anything,
but some new conscripts would sometimes
slip us a note.

During those hours we walked
around the pool, and we tried
to get closer to
The bars. Our relatives, who had
already discovered that we
were prisoners, passed their
hands through them, with clothes
and food to give us, while
shouting our names.

.....
144. In this case, it refers to a hair clip or barrette.

I spoke with my mother, the one who told me about my children, and I had to reassure her that I would be released soon (something no one there knew for sure). My mother, and all the other mothers, started crying at the gates.

Some very strange things happened there too. For example, one day it was raining and the conscript who was watching over us, instead of staying outside, went inside. He sat down on a bench next to the locker room gate and fell asleep.

While he was standing there, a bullet fell from his cartridge belt—bang!—to the ground. Poor conscripts! And then they shouted, "Prisoner search!" He stood up, clicked his heels, felt his gear, and noticed he was missing a bullet. One of the detainees told him, "Just stay put, don't move, we'll give it to you." And we were handing the ammunition to the conscript—tell me if this isn't an absurd world! Later, after the superiors had left, he thanked us and said, "Anything you need." Then he brought us little notes with messages from our families and collected the clothes we had hung on the bushes near the pool to dry.

The days passed slowly, too slowly, filled with thinking, meditating, weeping for our children, and listening to the pain and horror of the torture our companions endured. We even went out to meet them on the road, as they arrived staggering after the interrogations. As a guidance counselor, along with a psychologist there named Mireya¹⁴⁵, we had to calm some of the women. I remember, for example, a 16-year-old girl who was raped with an object. She hasn't spoken since. What immense pain I felt when I helped her bathe, taking off her blood-stained socks, while I told her she was pure and good, that she would forget, that all of this would just be a bad dream. Was it like that, Inés? Was it like that, little one? I hope life has rewarded you.

There was a lot of fear, and so, it wasn't long before someone was having a panic attack. One of those days, there was a very strong earthquake, and the psychologist I mentioned earlier and I had to restrain several of our colleagues. It was terrible because many rushed toward the exit gate. Mireya kept saying to me, "Oriana, you're trained, slap her! Tell her to calm down! Tell her to calm down!" That night I broke down, I was shaking all over and couldn't control my body. I was thinking about my children and my mother, alone with them.

145. The list of women detained at the National Stadium includes Ana Mirella Ibáñez González, however, we do not know if this is the person referred to by Oriana.

The women in the dressing room were very kind. They were organized. There was a group that had managed to get a thermos, and they would give us something hot: "Come on, sit down, have something to drink." They would cover us with a small blanket.

The women in the dressing room were very nice. They were organized. There was a group that had managed to get a thermos, and they would give us something hot: "Come on, sit down, have something." They would cover us with a little blanket. At that moment, those gestures were so sweet, and all we wanted was a hug. Since it had never happened before in

Chile, it was like a bad dream, and you'd say, "I'm going to wake up." But no, you didn't. There were people who would ask if you were cold and lend you clothes, socks. We all looked out for each other. I don't remember any conflicts or fights.

Among those of us there was a very strong woman, blonde, short, with blue eyes, whom we called "La Condorito"¹⁴⁷. She always lifted our spirits.

One day she arrived with bruises all over her back, her hands broken and bleeding. She had been put in a kind of stocks, where they tortured her. She arrived and sat down with great difficulty while everyone tried to put soft things on her, blankets, our blankets. And when she saw the worried faces we had on her, she still had the strength to smile and tell us: "They messed up the condor, girls, but they didn't cut off her "wings of the soul."

Then came the day they called me in for questioning. They woke us up very early. They told us: "Now! Get up, quickly, quickly." We got ready in a hurry.

Those who had them applied their creams to their faces. Some had a "rouge" (red lipstick)¹⁴⁸. And they brought it to put on, as a way to prevent their lips from chapping in the sun, which we presumed would be strong later. I wore very little makeup and only had a cream I always carried in my purse, which was the only thing I took when they took me out of the house. I left with just what I was wearing. It was still dark, and they led us in a line to the stadium stands. In the group was a rather elderly woman.

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146. Ximena George-Nascimento, in her account also included in this book, notes that she managed to get her family to send her a thermos. This way, they had hot water and could drink mate.

147. This refers to María Cecilia Yáñez, who was also detained in the National Stadium and in the Women's Correctional Facility and was known among the detainees as "La Condorito" or "La Condoro".

148. "Rouge" in Chilean colloquial speech refers to lipstick.

The older girl. I don't know why they had her detained, but the thing is, we looked at her and she was completely white, she looked like a mummy. She'd put toothpaste on her face instead of cream! Amidst the laughter, we started using little pieces of paper to peel off the hardened paste. It looked like she was wearing a mask! We had no shortage of things to laugh about.

Well, they kept us sitting there. The good thing was that, being there, we could see the male prisoners, among whom was my husband. That was the ray of light we needed to get through what was to come. When we were reunited, we were able to hug, and he whispered in my ear, "Repeat the names, the phone numbers, and mix them up, mix it all up." "Yes," I said. "And always feel clothed, feel like you have something covering you, and if you start to feel trapped, think of fields, of trees, close your eyes and think of that," he added. You know, all that psychological stuff.

Then they took us to the stairs closest to the place of the interrogation, which was where the radios were located. They were carrying us four abreast, or five to sit down at that area. While we waited, we could hear the screams or cries of our colleague who was inside.

Then they took us to the stairs closest to the interrogation site, which was where the radios were located .

from four or five to sit down that area. While we waited, we could hear the screams or cries of our colleague who was inside.

Then we would see her stagger out and if we wanted to hold her they would tell us: "If you touch her, you go in immediately." What helplessness and pain! This is also what I felt when a comrade, about 20 or

25 years old, whose hand I took under the poncho I was wearing, told me: "I'm going to lose the child I had. They hit me in the stomach, my poor little boy. They kicked me on the ground while they said, 'So you're pregnant, you bitch. You're going to give birth right here, you daughter of a bitch.'" She wouldn't let go of my hand, she was crying and kept saying, "He's all I have left of my partner." The day before, she had found out that he had been murdered. I don't know where I got the strength to tell her: "This isn't a time to have children. Let him go. Tell him you love him and will always love him. You'll have other children; you're young." At that moment, my heart bled along with that dying child. These are such terrible things.

149. This refers to the marquee area used by journalists at sporting events.

I really didn't want to remember them. I thought it was all over, but I see the images so clearly, and they were such young people...

There was another pregnant woman in the group. She had a Brazilian partner, and they were also found when we went to interrogate her. When she came out, she was crying and hugging us. They didn't use physical violence on her, but they tortured him and made her, tied up, watch. Tell me, isn't that sadism, pure perversion? How could people be capable of doing something like that? What happened to humanity?

And then it was my turn for interrogation. I went in with a feeling of hatred, fear, and anger because of what I had heard. My interrogator told me to sit down, asked my name and my profession, and had an assistant, who was tapping a Late 150 in his hands, search my wallet. He saw the photo of my children and smiled slyly: "So you have two children?" After that, he would eat the photo and all the pages of my notebook. He continued asking me about supposed weapons, which, of course, they hadn't found in my house. And then, why I had lived outside of Chile. My answer that my husband had found a good job in San Salvador didn't seem to convince him, so he added: "It's very close to Cuba."

"Did you receive training there?" "Impossible," I argued, "I left Chile pregnant and had another child there. Who would hire a woman with two small children in a military?"

At that moment, he is told that he is getting a phone call.

I was left alone with the man who had "the late."

He approached me with a newspaper in his hand and showed it to me, indicating that our comrades "had abandoned us." I turned my face away, but it cost me dearly: he grabbed me by the arms and threw me against the wall. My head wasn't broken, but I was dizzy.

Later, I would see the bruises on my body.

He came closer, put the newspaper to my nose and said: "If you don't want to look, you're going to undress.

"Unbutton your blouse!" I slowly began to do so. I was 32 years old at the time.

He looked at me in surprise and continued: "I'm going to give him parole, but he can't go near a high school to teach again. An intellectual with leftist ideas is worse than an extremist with a machine gun."

.....
150. "Do you know what a 'late' is? It's like a stick, but it's made entirely of telephone wire. If they hit you with it, it wouldn't leave a mark on your body, that's why they used it, in case the Red Cross checked you," Oriana explains.

He touched us everywhere. Women were generally tortured with the possibility of rape. They touched us. The mere fact of hearing "how beautiful she looks today!" was threatening.

Fortunately, the interrogator returned and, seeing what had happened, said to him, "Man, don't you realize she's a professional, an intellectual? She's not a prostitute." He clicked his heels—as if to say, "At your service"—and retreated to a corner. Then the interrogator continued. "Well, here I am, making a deal with the devil," he said. "And he'll get into heaven," I replied. He looked at me, surprised, and went on: "I'm going to give him parole, but he can't go near a high school to teach again. An intellectual with leftist ideas is worse than an extremist with a n

After my interrogation and other experiences, they returned me to the stadium stands. They took us out of there at nightfall. Gunfire could be heard outside. As we walked toward the pool, they stopped us abruptly, shone spotlights on us, and shouted through a loudspeaker: "20 of them for every one of us who falls dead." The shooting stopped. After a few minutes, they made us continue toward the pool changing rooms, practically crawling on the ground. The next day, we would be punished with two days of confinement to the changing rooms, in case any of us had somehow warned them that we would be passing by at that time. I really don't know what kind of movies they were playing .

After those two days of confinement, I and the other women being interrogated were moved to a different changing room, the one on the other side of the pool. They arrived suddenly and said, "Now! Grab your things, start moving!" When they came for us, I was taking a shower. The metal door only covered my midsection; my legs, from the knees down, and my head were uncovered. From a staircase near the entrance, you could see perfectly who was showering there. I heard footsteps that stopped halfway up the stairs. It was a young soldier who, with a malicious smile, asked me, "Do you need help?" I pressed myself against the door, trembling with fear, because I was alone in the bathroom at that moment, and my clothes were on top of a sink, outside the shower, so they wouldn't get wet. However, I mustered the strength to answer him, "No, I am a prisoner of war, and according to the Geneva Convention, I deserve respect."

.....
151. Regarding this situation described by Oriana, we found no records or further testimonies. It could be that there was some attempt from outside to resist the dictatorship, as the story suggests, although in this period this would be very unusual; or it could be a confusion on the part of the guards themselves, having heard a shooting that occurred in the stadium itself.

That's what "La Condorito" had taught us. This was like a "Stop!" My jailer turned around. He would try to find me near the pool later, but, thank God, I would get out of there soon. He didn't manage to find me, but he tried. I came out of the shower already dressed, and some of my companions told me to wake up a 16-year-old girl because she still wasn't up. They asked me to because they said I was "gentler." She had been tortured all night; they kept asking her where her father was. I went over and stroked her curly hair, and she said, "Daddy, is that you?" while smiling sweetly.

After that, fortunately for me, the day finally arrived when I left that hellhole. I wasn't there long; I don't remember exactly, but I think it was about eight days or a little more. Basically, I got out because I had a cousin in the navy who intervened to get me released. Later, my mother told me that he went to speak with a superior officer and sat there until he succeeded. Apparently, this happened right when I was being interrogated, which is why the officer left the room.

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in a deplorable state of mind

We were in the middle of the stadium field
We all lined up as we left. There was also a
stray dog we called "Cazuela" because
everyone thought we were going to eat him
one day. They called our names, and we all
took a step forward, full of hope. They made
us sign a departure list, but they told us that
anyone who couldn't get home could spend
the night there. I thought, "After signing,
what guarantees our safety?" And even
though there was only an hour left until
curfew—because back then it was quite
early, I don't remember if it was 6 or 7—I
decided to run through the streets to my
house. Other girls asked me for help and ran
with me. First we ran with shoes on, and
then just with socks; we thought we'd be

faster that way. We ran and ran and ran from the stadium to the California
Theater 152, because the point was not to be found in

152. Both places are located in the commune of Ñuñoa. There is approximately one and a half kilometers between one place and the other.

the street: they could arrest us, and if anyone asked they would say: "Yes, they signed and maybe where they went, well."

I arrived home, saw my children's faces, and received my mother's kiss. I cried for real, and I think I didn't stop for quite some time, though sometimes without tears. I arrived to a broken home, without my husband, unsure if I would keep my job, and in a deplorable state of mind. I spent a week without leaving the house, sitting on the steps, too weak even to make the beds. Thank God my mother was there to help me. She would take my oldest son to school while I cried with my youngest in my arms.

He remembers that perfectly and says, "I felt you and didn't know what to do, I hugged you so much so you wouldn't suffer." And I say, "How did I screw up?! How could I not have been stronger?!" Honestly, I tried to be. I didn't eat or anything, I didn't give him anything I couldn't eat, not even my cat. Until one day I decided they couldn't kill my inner strength, and I went to take my oldest son to school. When I saw a soldier, my legs trembled, and I couldn't cross the street, but my six-year-old son took my hand and said, "Hold on to me, I'll help you cross the street." That was my incentive not to give up. I was an adult woman, and he was a six-year-old boy, holding on to me: it was very symbolic; he was giving me a message. As Condorito said, they damaged me psychologically and physically, but they can't have...

The soul is destroyed. That is untouchable.

Some time later, that same boy would teach me another lesson in greatness: my sister-in-law called from outside Chile and told me to send my eldest son to her, that she could raise and feed him while everything was sorted out. I was discussing this with my mother at night, but he wasn't asleep as we thought. He overheard. The next day he told me, "Mom, send me to my aunt's. I love you very much, I won't forget you. If that way you can feed my brother better, do it!" He looked so small, his feet didn't even touch the floor of the chair he was sitting on. I hugged him and said, "No, we won't be separated. If we die, we'll die together." And to think that the latter almost happened: one day I was on the verge of throwing myself into a canal with my children.

My God, thank goodness I didn't do it, but how many wounds were left in my children's hearts! Those children couldn't be educated as they would have been if their parents had stayed together, as professionals.

My career was ruined, because I returned to the high school where I worked, in San Miguel, and on the second day they were raiding it. They took us out to the middle of the courtyard with our hands up, while they wrecked the physics and chemistry lab, which we had put together with so much effort.

Effort, money collected from students, parents, and teachers. The guidance room with the completed tests.

With such difficulty, scattered on the floor and with boot prints on the leaves, a room called 'the chapel' with the floor torn out plank by plank in search of weapons, and so many other things. The day after this, the Director called me to her office and suggested I resign. She told me that because I had been at the National Stadium, it was more than certain that they were going to suspend me from my position, and they might even arrest me again.

I left that job with great sorrow,
both my own and that of my
colleagues. I thought that
perhaps I could work at another
public high school, a false
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I started wandering around
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I left that job with great sorrow, both my own and that of my colleagues. I thought perhaps I could work at another public high school, a false hope. That would never happen again, not while the dictatorship lasted. I began to wander, searching for ways to support my children.

Over time, my cousin, the same one who helped me escape from the stadium, gave me a job at his factory. One day we stayed late working, and he suggested we become lovers. I remember telling him, "You're a bastard, I thought you were my brother. You're breaking the last family tie I wanted; you don't know what you're doing to my heart." And I left crying. I got home, and my mother nearly had a heart attack. She called him and told him straight out, "What would your uncle who raised you say? He was your father!" Many years later, when I was an old man, that cousin came to see me and knelt beside me. "I beg your forgiveness for everything," he said.

I forgave him because he was my blood, that's what I told him.

But, well, after that I was unemployed again, and that's when I got a job at La Vega Central. I worked cleaning counters in a tiny restaurant called "Los Pocitos"—I don't know if it still exists. Then, in 1976, I moved away from Santiago in an attempt to get a job at the high school. All my paperwork was ready, but they denied me the opportunity. So, I became

153. "La Vega" is a market near the north bank of the Mapocho River, in the Recoleta district of Santiago. It primarily sells fruits and vegetables from the agricultural areas of Central Chile. It also has a good number of food stalls offering dishes at reasonable prices.

I was selling used clothes in a small shop I set up in my house. My husband was still detained; he was imprisoned in Chacabuco 154 .

I left Santiago not only for the possibility of work, but also because I didn't want to be in that place of pain anymore. And after I left the stadium—this is very difficult for me to talk about—one of the torturers, a naval officer, came to offer me “help” before they took my husband north. He was a much older man than me and said, “Do you want your husband to go—or not—on a trip up north?” They were going to take him to the infamous Caravan of Death.¹⁵⁵ But all of this had

“A price,” as I later learned he would demand from other prisoners at the Stadium. It was so terrible for me! It was rape in exchange, literally, for a life. That's why I say the abuse wasn't just within the walls of that place, but continued outside during the dictatorship.

Later, this officer made sure my husband found out about all of this, and it hurt him deeply. They knew how to strike at key points to destroy “the enemy,” because for them, it was a war. Years later, when my husband returned to Chile, he didn't want to stay. We ended up thinking that maybe someday we'd get back together, but no, it didn't happen. There were too many wounds, too many things.

Certainly, one recovers. I recovered first thanks to my children.

However, before that, and based on what I've already described, I lived through a very dark time. I would leave my children with my mother and go out with people, drink, go dancing, party, as young people call it. Things I hadn't done before getting married, I was doing now. It was like trying to run at full speed. If I could enter a car race, I would. Anything dangerous. It was about living, because tomorrow you could die! Everything I had experienced left me with a feeling of death and, at the same time, a desire for life. I also had many problems. I couldn't have a partner because I would go to the bathroom and vomit. Many years later, I spoke with

154. The Chacabuco Prison Camp “was one of the largest in the country.” It was located at the Chacabuco Nitrate Works, about 110 kilometers from Antofagasta. It operated from the beginning of November 1973 until April 1975. It was for men only. It housed “about a thousand political prisoners.”

155. The Caravan of Death is the name given to a Chilean Army convoy that traveled the country during 1973. Ordered by Augusto Pinochet, its mission was to expedite and review the cases of people detained after the military coup, in order to prevent a “soft hand” toward “extremists.” The operation was led by General Sergio Arellano Stark and ended with the murder and forced disappearance of 97 political prisoners. This story is told in the series *Ecos del Desierto* (2013) by Andrés Wood.

156. It refers to going out partying or celebrating.

I started trying to get my life back on track. It was

It's difficult, because you can't rebuild yourself on your own overnight. Later, metaphysics helped me a lot in that regard, as did joining a fraternity to which I still belong today.

There I learned to know myself and found a meaning in life.

A psychologist from PRAIS¹⁵⁷ told me that it was very natural, because it was a rejection associated with the situation I had experienced.

I started trying to get my life back on track. It was difficult, because you don't rebuild yourself on your own overnight. Later, metaphysics and joining a fraternity, to which I still belong today, helped me a great deal. There, I learned about myself and found meaning in life. This happened after I had moved away from Santiago. I made a friend across

the street who owned a liquor store. She would let me use her phone to talk to my mother, who lived in Santiago (later, she came to live with me). This friend kept urging me to meet Jorge, a friend of hers, until one day I finally met him. We started talking and talking. He was part of the fraternity. We chatted for a year, and I began to take an interest, to listen. He became my best friend, my soulmate, until he died. He brought me to the fraternity, which is why I've always said that "goodness," or Christ, or whatever you want to call it, came looking for me in "a bar." Thirty or thirty-two years have passed since then, and now I teach, giving free workshops to help others.

After my arrest, I stopped my activism because I thought, "What if they arrest me again and my children are left alone?" The Communist Party offered me help because my husband was still imprisoned, but I refused. I had my mother's support, and by then I had already left Santiago and was finally working as a teacher.

It was a private school, because I was never accepted into the public schools.

One of my concerns was protecting my children. Leaving the city was a way to prevent them from being followed as well. However, I didn't stop it. They were about twelve and fifteen years old, and there was a riot in the town square, and they came looking for them at the house. "Where were your children at the moment...," I don't know. They came to my house, but they also went to the house of a doctor who was known to be a leftist.

157. Comprehensive Health Care and Reparation Program (PRAIS) available for qualified victims of human rights violations in the recent dictatorship and their immediate family members.

They were boarders at the Barros Arana Hospital because, since I was working, I didn't want my mother to bear the entire burden of their care. That, honestly, saved them from a lot of trouble. things.

I remember another time, when I had the used clothing business, they came to my house to question me. My youngest son was sick and hadn't gone to school. They saw him and asked if I could go outside, because they didn't want to talk in front of him. They wanted to ask me about some people who had done something in town, leftists, and, of course, they assumed I had been involved or had hidden them, or something like that. I told them no, I had no idea. I had taught my two children that if they arrested me, they should go immediately to the priest and tell him they wanted a writ of habeas corpus, because that's the only way I could save myself. Imagine! So, when I went back inside, my poor little son was sitting by the window, pale. He had a piece of paper in his little hands and had written down the license plate number of the truck parked out front, in case they took me. He said, "Mommy." I hugged him and said, "Cry, son, please, cry."

It was the only way I could think of, because I thought she was going to faint. At nine years old! Because of things like this, I find it hard to believe that everything stayed still. Besides, right-wing people always think this didn't happen.

I don't know if it's a feeling of persecution I have, but they're there, they exist, silently, but they exist. That's why I went many years without sharing my story. If I said anything, I was afraid of putting my children's lives at risk. If something happened to me, and my husband was away, who would they be with? Now I ask myself, why do we keep so much to ourselves? Now I understand.

But also, who was I going to tell? How was I going to tell my mother? She had suffered amnesia at one point and didn't remember what had happened until the day she died. Friends in the field of psychology told me, "Don't unblock her, just leave her alone." I think that was a great help to her. You also don't want to talk about it because you're rejected by the group or they don't believe you. I tried to

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Tell my sister, for example. She's right-wing, but she's my sister and I love her just the same, and one day I tried to tell her, "I suffered a lot, you've never asked me what I went through, I've always wanted to talk to you." "No, Oriana, because if it had been the other way around, it would have been terrible," she replied curtly. "With the only difference," I told her, "that if it had been like that and I had had to rescue you and my brother-in-law hiding in a cart covered with straw, I would have gotten you out." And that was the end of it. I think that's the deepest difference between left-wing and right-wing people: left-wing people, and especially the humblest people, will always be moved by the pain and suffering of others. They won't try to ignore it.

The truth is that the first time I told what I had experienced was when I went to make my declaration as exonerated, that's why they later gave me the Valech¹⁵⁸ pension . I testified not without some fear, but I did it because I thought, "There has to be some record of all this, something written down." Now my conviction about this is absolute. Although it was very difficult, I had a very nice experience there. I was helped by someone at INP¹⁵⁹ at that time, and they told me I had to fill it out there, "that piece is for your history." It was a relatively small space. "I'll write it quickly," I thought. He gave me a tissue, a thermos, a mug, and I thought, "Why is he doing all this?" He knew perfectly well why. He said, "You can start writing, and if you want, you can tell us about it." I started writing and began to cry. I took out the tissue. A while later, I was still crying and writing. He gave me another sheet of paper, and then another, so I could continue. He poured me a small cup of coffee. Just then, someone came in and said, "Get out, man, get out! You can't come in!" When I said, "That's it! I'm finished," he stood up and bowed to me. "You're a survivor," he said. Oh, that

Incidentally, many of the things I've recounted in this story aren't in the Valech Report statement. Those that were, how to put it, "more compromising" for me, I kept quiet about, like the one about that officer who later sought me out.

Perhaps I didn't say anything because women are often not believed. That happened to me, in fact, when I experienced harassment from my cousin. My mother believed me because she was my mother, but then his wife called me and said, "Oriana, what happened? Wasn't it, Orianita, that you were wearing a very short skirt?"

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158. The National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, or better known as the "Valech Commission", was created in 2003, to clarify the identity of those who experienced deprivation of liberty and torture for political reasons, at the hands of agents of the State or people in its service during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

159. Social Security Institute.

Now, after I shared my story, when I really let it out, was when I spoke at PRAIS. As the years went by, the physical aftereffects appeared: spinal problems, vertigo due to an issue in my left ear, and a visit to a psychologist in the program. I went to see her quite late. I explained that I hadn't done it before because I was afraid; I didn't want to talk about anything in front of strangers. Of course, you go to a psychologist, but how do you know if they're someone who might betray you and reveal everything you've said? After the therapy session, she told me I had learned to live with my pain, and I think I have.

Well, I should also mention that, over the years, I had a partner. We were together for the last ten years. He was also a leftist, and so he would tell me about his experiences and I about mine. Of course, I could talk then, and he would listen, understand, and hug me. For a long time, I dreamed about the boots going up the stairs: "Ta! Ta! The clacking of heels was horrible, horrible!"

Later, he developed Alzheimer's, and at the clinic, they put me in group therapy because of his illness. One day I arrived at the session furious: a private university had closed, and I thought about the disaster that meant for so many families, because even the dog had gone on a diet so his daughter could study there. However, the owners had lined their pockets with money, and the rest of us didn't care at all. Things like this trigger a button in me that says "anger."

That day my inner revolutionary came out and the psychologist asked me: "How are you?" "Don't talk to me," I told him, "I'm furious." He asked me why, I told him the news and said, "What did we fight so hard for? What was the point of the blood spilling in the streets? For everything to stay the same?" I had already told him, at some point, that I had been arrested, but I had never wanted to talk about it, and at that moment, he "took advantage" of my state and said to me, "Start telling us about your arrest." Don't keep it bottled up, let it all out now, with all the anger you have inside." And I started to let it out, I started to remember things, and feelings I had no idea were buried began to surface. Suddenly I looked around and my group members were crying. "That's it, I'm not going to continue, that's enough," I said. They were all women who had their own pain. I wanted to make them laugh: "I'm going to tell you a phrase one of my friends said: 'They messed with the condor, but they didn't clip its wings.'" You have to turn things around, that's the way, otherwise you can't

About two years ago, I used to go to a group of detainees here, people who had been tortured. But then I stopped going because it was always the same story, them telling each other: "What happened to you? What happened to me?" I told them that we weren't getting stronger with that, that I thought we should get together and form a group.

a file, or anything like that, to get together to try to recover from our wounds, not just to pity each other.

"They've ruined our lives, why should they keep damaging our future? No! We must have a strong soul, a powerful spirit."

I don't know, I think of Mandela¹⁶⁰, of telling the story of our pain, our suffering, but we overcame it.

Otherwise, they really killed us. And no way!

"Condorito" said it: "They didn't kill my soul." I think that's what we have to think about. We have to adopt the most positive attitude because what do you gain by dragging the past around?

You get sick.

I've been writing since I was 15, and I wrote a poem for them, for the members of that group, that captured some of our experiences. It's called "Yellow Begonia" and it goes like this:

I'm buying a yellow begonia.

I want to soothe my pain

There was so much cruelty, torture, and shame.

He was vomiting clots of blood.

I was lost in Calera.

I appeared in Valparaíso,

kidnapped by the intelligence service.

"They've ruined our lives, why should they keep damaging our future? No! We have to have strong souls, powerful spirits." I don't know, I think of Mandela telling the story of

Our pain, our suffering, but we overcame it. If not, then they killed us.

Really. And no way!

.....
¹⁶⁰. Nelson Mandela, South African activist and politician who led the movements against apartheid. In 1994, after a long struggle and 27 years in prison, he presided over the first government that ended the racist regime.

I spent 24 hours in a bathtub full of water,
I have osteoarthritis in my hips.
I missed the bus that day,
Negligence saved my life.

Do you want to come back in, pretty blonde?
Hold on to your classmates!
squeeze your hand under your poncho,
enduring their own pain and theirs.

Was it a war? That's what they called it.
against enemies with only tools,
Others with books and ideas.

The demon passed over the earth.
We experienced hell inside and out.

There are flowers in the windows today.
The grandchildren sing at our parties.
The wound is covered with new skin.

Winter passes, spring arrives.
Then will come summer, autumn, winter, and spring again.

I gaze at the yellow begonia,
I caress its petals,
I can tell you, that as long as I look at her,
She will still be beautiful!

As I was saying, I left that group later, but I've been involved for a long time in a human rights organization. It's less prominent now because we have a right-wing mayor, but it used to even have its own headquarters. Lately, I attend less because my health has limited me. I've essentially hung up my gloves; I only participate when there's a big meeting or when I need to write something to attend. But there are still people who come to see me, and I still run into them when they go to artistic events. Sometimes, at an event, I read my poems. I say a few words about my experience—"I was at the National Stadium, you understand what happened there"—and then I read my poem.

I have my circle of friends who are artists, painters, writers, you name it, and we call each other: "What are you having for lunch today?" "Something like this." "Oh, I'm having something like this." "Let's get together and have lunch." I also belong to a writers' association. We publish a magazine.

And some of my writings and those of my partner, who was also a writer, have been published there. I'll share a couple of pieces below, but before that, I want to say

that without these experiences, I might be a bourgeois woman. Although I was middle class, my father provided us with every comfort he could, and perhaps I would fall into that category. Maybe I'd be talking about malls, dresses, tea, who knows. Everything that happened is part of me; it has shaped me, and despite the very difficult and sad times, I still sing "Gracias a la vida" by Violeta Parra, and I find joy in looking at flowers, the sun, the trees, and in caressing my little granddaughter.

I have my circle of friends—
artists, painters, writers, you
name it—and we call each other:
"What are you having for
lunch today?" "This." "Oh, I'm
having this." "Let's get together
and have lunch." I also belong
to a writers' association.

The street

The street belongs to everyone,

lie!

It belongs to them,

of those who live in it,

building cardboard shacks,

covering them with plastic,

lying down on mattresses.

Covering themselves with newspapers.

Decorating them with stuffed animals

hung on hooks,

remembering that they were children

abandoned and lonely.

Sharing with their peers,

a cup of tea, bread, a small gift.

And let's not forget the guard dog,

It provides warmth, companionship, and protection.

We...went through it,

closing your eyes

so as not to look at them.

Fear (which is a more introspective poem)

I let the fear out.
from the dark depths of my insides.
I have a sour taste in my mouth,
I can taste the bitterness of tears.

I am weak, I am sick.
I walk through the tangled web,
exposed to being devoured
any human beast.

I want to end it all.
To get out of this dark pit,
towards the infinite light.

I must wait for the order
from the closing whistle.
Because I accepted this game,
I must maintain my dignity.
I let the fear out,
fear of being a coward,
fear of feeling pain,
fear of being alone,
to die without anyone noticing,
of living without being loved,
fear of you, and of myself.

Teacher's shoes (dedicated to the female colleagues of Normal School No. 2)

Teacher shoes,

old and worn-out shoes,

that you were a party girl at the parties,

moving from cueca to tango.

Running through the hallways, or in the courtyard of that school with an eighty-year-old oak tree.

The years have taken their toll on you.

Like your children,

your school,

your good woman face

hardened by joys and tears.

Poor schoolteacher,

Today, time has passed.

You're wearing fine clothes now.

and you dye your gray hair blonde.

Nothing shows your tiredness anymore,

from teaching so many letters

to your former students.

But something does give you away,

They're your old, worn-out shoes.

“I LEARNED THAT ONE IS
COMMIT TO ITS PEOPLE AND
THEIR STRUGGLES”



Silvia Leiva Gómez¹⁶¹

I was an activist from a very young age, because I was always glued to my father's side, who was a socialist and a union leader. In 1948, during the time of Gabriel González Videla, we lived in the north, and he was accused of being a communist and persecuted.¹⁶² He was barely 18 years old and already a father. His name was Waldo Mar

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¹⁶¹. The interviews that gave rise to this story were conducted by Andrea Pequeño in Santiago, Chile, on May 23 and 25, 2018.

¹⁶². During the government of Gabriel González Videla, president of Chile between 1946 and 1952, the Law for the Permanent Defense of Democracy was enacted, approved by the National Congress on September 3, 1948. This law, known as the “cursed law”, outlawed the Communist Party of Chile (PCCh) between 1948 and 1957.

He fled to Santiago, and my mother, Guadalupe Gómez, and I followed him. I was two years old, and my brother was one.

In the capital, my family participated in a land occupation in La Legua¹⁶³, where I lived until I was 14. There, in addition to my father's experience, I received teachings from Clotario Blest's school¹⁶⁴. From both of them I learned that one becomes committed to one's people and their struggles.

From a very young age, I was active in the Socialist Party. I was just entering adolescence, but I already had grassroots work in La Legua Emergencia and La Legua Nueva. Around that time, in the early 1960s, we organized a land occupation in San Miguel. In this place, which was called Campamento Nueva Palena, the garbage truck didn't come, and a group of residents occupied the Municipal building in protest.

The mayor was from the same party, and our action wasn't well received. I was 13 years old, and I was sent to the Disciplinary Committee.

Later, I participated in the Committee of the Homeless,¹⁶⁵ organizing young people, because there were many of us who, living in Nueva Palena and having already started our own families, found ourselves living as relatives. When I began this work I was not a member of any political party, but later I joined the ranks of the MIR¹⁶⁶ because it identified with our struggles.

.....
¹⁶³. It is one of the oldest settlements in the city of Santiago, founded by its inhabitants, mostly workers from the north and farmers from the central region of the country. The name Legua Vieja (Old League) distinguishes the oldest section. The Legua Nueva (New League) and La Legua de Emergencia (Emergency League) sections emerged later, between 1947 and 1950, in the context of the city's housing crisis, due to the relocation of residents from a squatter settlement in another part of the city, and in 1951, through the allocation of emergency housing. The name comes from the fact that it is "only a league" from Santiago's Plaza de Armas (Main Square). Historically, it was known for its strong left-wing political commitment and was therefore heavily repressed during the recent dictatorship.

¹⁶⁴. Clotario Blest Rizzo was a Chilean trade union leader. He participated in the creation of various organizations, including: the National Association of Public Employees (ANEP), the Unified Workers' Central (CUT), the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), and the Committee for the Defense of Human and Trade Union Rights (CODEHS).

¹⁶⁵. This Committee was formed in the early 1970s and carried out land occupations by homeless workers. Clotario Blest participated as one of its founders.

¹⁶⁶. Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), an organization founded in 1965 as part of the New Left that advocated political-military struggle, distancing itself from the historical left represented in Chile mainly by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

In mid-1969, we carried out another occupation in San Miguel: the Magaly Honorato Camp. At that time, the election campaign was underway, and we decided to actively support Salvador Allende. In 1970, when Allende left

Mr. President, I felt, like many others, that there were possibilities for a better life. We had hopes.

Shortly after, the Ranquil, Elmo Catalán, and Magaly Honorato camps were unified, giving rise to what would become the Nueva Habana Camp.¹⁶⁷ After many mobilizations and procedures at the Ministry of Housing, we obtained the allocation of a property called Los Castaños, in La Florida. We arrived at that land on November 1, 1970, and quickly began to organize.

Initially, we established an assembly where decisions regarding the camp were discussed and made, and then we created a body called the Board of Directors, made up of about 50 delegates. The decisions made there were communicated to the blocks, comprised of 64 families, and to the work groups: health, education, culture, security, among others.

It was fantastic! Because it meant there was no bureaucracy and no room for strongman rule or for those who didn't want to do things right. At that time, I was a young mother of two and the only woman among the nine elected to lead the party. Even though we were young, we still faced repression. That, and the experience of it all...

New Havana marked my life.

In my opinion, this was the experience of people's power in Chile. We achieved each and every one of these things through struggle.

In my opinion, this was the experience of people's power in Chile. We achieved everything through struggle in the streets and with the organization and commitment of the people. We demanded and defended our rights by marching in the center of Santiago. They accused us of "putting it in They were called "goals against the Government", "ultra-leftists", "playing into the hands of the right", but they could say whatever they wanted because rights are always defended, regardless of the government in

167. The Nueva Habana Camp emerged as a result of a land occupation promoted by the Revolutionary Left Movement MIR in 1970 as part of the popular power strategy assumed by this organization.

In the streets, with the organization and commitment of the people, we demanded and defended our rights by marching in downtown Santiago. They accused us of "scoring goals against the government," of being "ultra-leftists," of "playing into the hands of the right wing," but they could say whatever they wanted because rights must always be defended, regardless of the government in power.

Because of the conditions in which we lived—without urbanization, without electricity, and without water—health was a priority. We placed water troughs every 200 meters, built sanitary latrines, and constructed a polyclinic. Each resident contributed a small board for this purpose. Together with medical students, we conducted prevention courses and first aid training. In the first year, about 40 children died from diarrhea, malnutrition, and pneumonia; in the second year, only 11; and in the third, none. In addition, we assist in births: we receive 35 or 40 babies.

Then, we pressured the government to provide us with a clinic, installed and recognized by the National Health Service. Thus, We had doctors and a nurse. and all the relevant professionals. We proposed that the colleagues who had already received the training be hired and that they also be given further training.

In addition, Tencha, Hortensia Bussi¹⁷⁰, gave us a jeep that

Those of us who came from the towns knew where the We identified needs and were able to bring them to the table, contributing to the improved functioning of the system and each clinic. I, in my fifth year of high school, became the Head of the New Havana Health Front and the representative to this Joint Co

168. "There were five latrines, cesspools, for the women and five for the men per block. Families took turns cleaning them with chlorine, three times a day, and adding lime for disinfection."

169. "One block consisted of 64 families and had a 'health militia member' (mostly women), trained in disease prevention and First Aid. They would come by before 8 a.m. to check that the bins (at night families relieved themselves in bins or chamber pots) and the trash had been taken out. I don't know if anyone would accept someone knocking on their door early in the morning to see if their house was clean. In our case, it had been discussed democratically in the board and in every block, and we had understood and become aware that if everyone cleaned up, we would prevent infections for the whole community.

170. Mercedes Hortensia Bussi Soto, known as "La Tencha", was a Chilean teacher, librarian and activist and wife of Chilean President Salvador Allende.

We transformed it into an ambulance: we fitted it with a stretcher and everything. It was great, because the nearest hospital was about an hour and a half away by car, and of course, in case of an emergency, we couldn't get there.

We earned our right to participate in the Joint Health Council of the Southeast Health Area, at the Puente Alto Hospital, where policies for the region were defined. We ensured that our votes carried the same weight as those of any medical professional. Those of us who came from the communities knew where the needs were and could bring them to the table, contributing to the improved functioning of the system and each clinic. I, in my fifth year of high school, became the Head of the Health Front in Nueva Habana and the representative to this Joint Council. I was able to do this because we worked collectively, as a team.

From the State, Dr. Elena Gálvez assumed the role of Director of the clinic whom, incidentally, we called "Che Guevara." She was a professional and a highly respected member of the Socialist Party¹⁷¹ in our camp. She showed the same commitment to the clinic down below¹⁷², which was run by the Communist Party, as she did to us, most of whom were members of the MIR. Along with her name, I also want to highlight those of other doctors, such as Eduardo Carmona, Raúl Díaz, and Juan Carlos Menares, Carmen Vergara and Cecilia Jarpa.

These were joined by medical students, including Silvia Lagos, Raúl Berlicheski, Claudia (I don't remember her last name), Patricia Grau, and many others whose names I've forgotten at the moment. Although it wasn't common, there were right-wing doctors who took an interest and stayed with us. Despite the names—"militiawomen," "Che Guevara"—which perhaps grated on their ears, they risked everything to remain there until September 11, 1973.

During the Popular Unity government, community and collective action were a core value of this society. Nueva Habana embodied this not only in healthcare but in every aspect of its work. As you can see, I could talk for days about this.

171. Dr. Gálvez's affiliation with the Socialist Party is not confirmed by other sources. In fact, she herself defined herself as an "Allendista" and not as a member of any party, information corroborated by her daughter in a personal conversation between Isidora Salinas and Andrea Pequeño, in Santiago, Chile, June 2018.

172. This refers to the Popular Unity Camp, located one kilometer from New Havana, which reportedly replicated the health policies implemented there. Beyond party divisions, Silvia indicates, they joined forces in the Joint Council mentioned earlier in the text.

It was a tremendous experience. It was precisely because of that involvement that they came looking for me after the coup.

Actually, before September 11, 1973, everyone was talking about an impending coup, but no one really wanted to believe it. As MIR militants, we had foreseen it for some time. In fact, we had been on high alert since August. In our camp, for example, people would go out to work, but they would return as soon as their shift ended, and the leaders only left for errands.

On Tuesday, September 11, 1973, I began to hear proclamations military personnel on all radio stations

And then Radio Magallanes broadcast live: they felt the bombs fall in La Moneda and then Tomás Moro. At the camp, many of us hugged each other.

And we cried from helplessness, from rage. Many of us

The urge to go downtown, to go out and fight, but with what? The Arms Law enacted by Allende had disarmed us and weakened the cordons

Industrial. Impossible!

Meanwhile, the country was discussing the possibility of a plebiscite to resolve the problems with the right wing and thus quell the “saber-rattling.”¹⁷³ Then we were told that this would take place and we lowered our guard, thinking that things were calming down. But no! On Tuesday, September 11, 1973, I began

to hear military announcements in all the radio stations and, later, Radio Magallanes broadcast live: the

Bombs fell on La Moneda and then on Tomás Moro.¹⁷⁴ In the encampment, many of us hugged and cried with helplessness, with rage. Many of us wanted to go downtown, to have gone out to fight, but with what? The Arms Law¹⁷⁵ enacted by Allende had disarmed us and weakened the industrial belts. Impossible!

173. This expression originates from the way in which Chilean military personnel showed their discontent during the 71st Ordinary Session of the Senate of Chile, on September 4, 1924.

174. The Presidential House was located at 200 Tomás Moro Street, in the Las Condes district. On September 11, 1973, it was bombed at the same time as the La Moneda Palace.

175. Refers to Law No. 17,798 which establishes arms control, promulgated on October 20, 1972.

So what to do? We organized ourselves: the young people and children from the camp distributed the milk from the clinic among the families in each block.

Television and radio broadcast the proclamations with instructions and the names of the first “most wanted”, among which were Corvalán, Miguel Enríquez¹⁷⁶ and Alejandro Villalobos. The latter, known as “Mike”, was our camp leader and my romantic partner for a little over a year.

After hearing the first announcement, around 6:30 or 7:00 in the morning, he and a couple of other people went to the agency that sold us food for the camp's warehouse. They took out what was in a huge truck that he drove himself. We saw him arrive and couldn't believe it. Immediately the militiamen – a term we used because we were great admirers of the Cuban revolutionary process¹⁷⁷ – began their work: unloading and distributing the products according to the number of members in each family; for example, if there were three, they were given an eighth of a liter of oil, if there were ten, a liter.

The soldiers would seize women wearing trousers and tear them, telling them they should wear dresses; men with long hair would have their hair cut off with knives. But this was the mildest of it. Every town was being raided, people were arrested, taken to public squares, and disappeared.

In La Legua, entire families were executed, members of the UP or MIR parties. We expected them to reach Nueva Habana, since it was known that the MIR was there. We maintained the guard system we had previously established to protect the peace of the population and to prevent Patria y Libertad from entering our territory.

We were in uncertainty for two weeks until the Army Captain from Puente Alto appeared with a contingent of soldiers. They brought paraffin, rice, and noodles.

.....
^{176.} Luis Corvalán Lepe was the General Secretary of the Chilean Communist Party. Miguel Enríquez Frodden was the founder and General Secretary of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) and one of the most wanted militants after the coup, yet he refused to seek asylum. On October 5, 1974, he was killed in a confrontation with the DINA.

^{177.} The Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959, overthrowing – through a guerrilla war – the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and bringing Fidel Castro, a lawyer, military officer and Marxist politician, to power.

^{178.} The Nationalist Front Fatherland and Liberty was a far-right paramilitary group that emerged in 1971 in response to the government of Salvador Allende and its socialist policies. After the attempted coup of June 29, 1973, known as the “Tanquetazo,” it opted for armed struggle and terrorism to end the Popular Unity government.

and sacks of sugar at lower prices. He called a meeting: he wanted to demonstrate that "they had nothing against the villagers," that we had been "deceived" by terrorist criminals from the MIR, and, since he "did not want to retaliate," he expected us to reveal their whereabouts.

This call to action was also included in leaflets dropped from helicopters a few days earlier. However, the leaders and activists left the camp as soon as we learned the army was coming, because we thought they were going to arrest us.

There was one leader who stayed behind and presented himself as such at the assembly. I never understood why he did it, but they arrested him and tortured him.

In the following days, I continued going to work at the office, sometimes sporadically, sometimes disappearing. I knew they could arrest me at any moment. As long as I wasn't detained, the office staff would keep me on the payroll.

This helped me later when they captured me, because I would tell them: "But I was working until yesterday!"

I was arrested for the first time on October 3rd. I've analyzed my arrest and those of others, and I believe we made many mistakes. We had never experienced a dictatorship before, and in my opinion, the importance of taking protective measures wasn't understood. We didn't have, for example, a safe house, a place to go.

Chile was terrified. Some of our relatives were lighting candles to all the Virgin Mary statues so we wouldn't show up at their houses. Being given shelter was considered suspicious, and people were afraid.

I was arrested on October 3rd.

with my father. We were each hiding on our own, but we agreed to meet at the

My sister's house in San Miguel. At my father's request, she called the only phone in town to let my mother know we would meet at 10:00 in the morning.

The father assumed that the woman who answered the calls wouldn't report us. What he didn't know was that the husband had been arrested the day before.

In the following days, I continued going to work at the clinic, sometimes sporadically, sometimes disappearing. I knew they could arrest me at any moment. As long as I wasn't taken into custody, the clinic staff would keep me on the payroll. This came in handy later when they captured me, because I could tell them, "But I was working just yesterday!"

My family had 11 children, so she didn't hesitate to alert the military as a way to "save" him. That's where they found us. We were waiting for my mother when suddenly we heard vehicles braking. There was a small backyard, and I ran to jump over the fence into the neighbor's house. I didn't make it across: they grabbed my hair.

My father was arrested because he was with me. They didn't yet know that he was also an active leader. But, in reality, I wasn't captured for being a camp leader, but because of "Mike." They assumed I would tell them where he was. They identified me as "the mistress," and, in that capacity, they treated me very rudely.

The fact that they were terribly sexist, in part, helped me: I insisted that I was a married woman and that I lived with my husband, although I had been separated from the father of my children for about two years.

That same day at 9:30, a Belgian priest had come by to give me, on a rolled-up bus ticket, an address for a safe house for "Mike." I put it in my bra. They put us on an army truck that had stacks of tires piled up, and our heads were crushed against them. I took advantage of the situation to take it out and swallow it. On the way, my dad told me, "Daughter, they're going to kill us."

After that, many times I would think that they would.

First they took us to the San Police Station Miguel and then to Puente Alto. In this last place, unfortunately, at the same time as us, the electric current machine arrived: They tested it on us.

The soldiers seemed a bit lost. They made a number of mistakes due to their inexperience. The first, for example, was taking my father and me into the same room and interrogating us together. From their questions, we realized they didn't know anything. Nevertheless, they used brutal torture methods. They ordered us to undress.

I've lived in Sweden for years, and there are nudist camps there and nothing happens, but at that time I was so young, and undressing in front of 15 soldiers and my dad was a huge humiliation for me. They hadn't touched me, but that act alone was horrible.

The soldiers seemed a bit lost. They made a number of mistakes due to their lack of experience. The first of these, for example, was taking my father and me into the same room and interrogating us together. From their questions, we realized they had no idea about anything. However, they used brutal methods of torture.

There were iron cots on the floor; they tied us to them with our hands and legs spread and began to indulge themselves by applying electric shocks: first to our legs and hands, then they added our mouths, ears, and genitals. In my subsequent detentions, I endured other forms of torture, but at least I had a doctor present. I realized then how brutal this first experience had been.

Furthermore, they all asked questions at once, and if we didn't answer, they hit us with their rifle butts. On June 29th of that same year, during the Tancazo¹⁷⁹, I had had my gallbladder removed. I still had the wound, and one of them put his boot on my stomach and said to me, with a supreme level of ignorance, "Of course, because you were pregnant and had an abortion." Later, we talked with my father and concluded that it helped that they all asked questions together. It was difficult to understand, and we ended up complaining, without fully answering. Well, each of us tried not to do it too much so as not to upset the others, but there were times when it was impossible. It was heartbreaking.

After the torture, a man would come who played the role of the "good man." "Come on, little girl, talk. You'll get out faster, think of your children, your poor mother," he would tell me. One of the first times I asked him for water, and he advised me: "Don't drink it. If they've given you too much electric shock, your heart will stop." I didn't know how true what he said was, but I remember even thanking him.

There were moments when, honestly, I didn't think about my children or my mother, but instead asked myself, "How much longer can I endure?" I withstood everything they did to me. There, I was raped by several uniformed men in front of my father. While it was happening, my mind wandered. It would come back to me, repeating internally, "It's the enemy doing this," and "What will come next?" There were seconds when I thought about my father, how he must be suffering; I heard him begging and crying for them to stop. He didn't succeed.

On one occasion they also staged a mock execution. They took us out
We were blindfolded. There were police dogs; I thought they would bite me: I felt the heat coming from their snouts very close to my body with each bark. They made us walk.
Sometimes they would push us and say, "Be careful, you'll fall into the hole!" We would try to dodge and they would laugh, it was a lie!

179. The military uprising against the Popular Unity (UP) government of President Salvador Allende is known as the "Tanquetazo" or "Tancazo." It occurred on June 29, 1973, and was led by Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper of the 2nd Armored Regiment.

On one occasion we also

They conducted a simulation of execution. They took us out.

I was blindfolded. There were police dogs; I thought they would bite me. I felt the heat coming from their snouts very close to my body with each breath.

Barking. They made us walk.

Sometimes they would push us and say, "Be careful, you'll fall into the hole!" We would try to dodge and they would laugh, it was a lie!

They tied our hands, back to back, I don't know to what, but it felt like a log.

They left us standing. My dad, being bigger than me, tried to bend his knees a little so as not to strain my arms. After several days on cots, I was exhausted.

torture to join the limbs.

While I was in that position, they staged a mock execution: they gave the order to ready their weapons, bullets were passed around, and then I heard, "Fire, now!" I swear I felt warm blood rush to my chest. My father moved his fingers over it.

In that second I thought, "How strange! I'm exactly the same as I was on Earth." I already thought I was dead. Today I can smile remembering this, but at that moment I was devastated.

Right there, there was a sort of railway station and train cars.

They put us in one of them. We had just been tortured, and the other comrades who were already inside made room for us to lie down. We couldn't stand up. There were two other people lying on the floor, like us. That first night there was a very strong tremor. The train car was shaking a lot and people started to panic and scream.

They shot at us from outside, through the cracks in the small windows. Some bodies fell on top of us, and we had no room to move or change position. It was dark, we couldn't see, so we didn't know if they had fainted or been hit by a bullet. Fortunately, it wasn't the latter.

The next day, I think, they took us all out. They instructed us to lie face down. There were some Bolivian girls who didn't understand the order because they didn't know the term: "So you're acting all brave," they said to them. They brought some buckets of water and, while they threw it on them, they shouted mockingly: "So you..."

.....

180. Term derived from Mapuche and used in Chilean colloquial language as equivalent to "womb".

"Do you want the sea?"¹⁸¹. Then, while we were standing, they put blankets over us. They did that at the Stadium too.

The sun was shining and the heat was suffocating me; my knees buckled and the blows from the rifle butts began. I don't know if it was that same day or another, but they made my dad sit in a corner and me, alone, with my legs crossed in front of a guy: he started running his hands along the ground and looking at me, moving his tongue, sucking his lips and fingers in a sexual gesture. He called me to his side. I was paralyzed. They allowed it, that's why I think it was someone from the same army.

I think they held us there in Puente Alto for about 10 days. I honestly don't remember exactly, because after three days of torture I started losing track of time. Besides, they didn't distinguish between day and night. From there, several of us were taken to the National Stadium in a bus. We sat together, handcuffed, with my father. Another proof that they didn't really know what they were doing, because afterward they wouldn't even let you near a relative or someone you knew.

Arriving at the stadium was incredibly sad. In front of a table where they were taking down information, they formed a line of men and a line of women. Only four of us women had come from Puente Alto. They called my father's name, asked him his name, and I don't know what else, but he quickly went back to the line. Then it was my turn. They asked me the names of my parents, my grandparents, my siblings. While they were doing this, I glanced at my father's file, which was on top of me. It had something written across it: "He must be shot." I looked at it again, checking. I had to answer the questions, but I was in shock and my voice kept faltering. When I got back to the line, I went as close to him as I could: "They're going to shoot him," I said. "You enter this struggle knowing what could happen," he replied. He took out a bloodstained handkerchief and held it out to me, brushing against my hand: "Give this to your mother. Tell her I loved her, that she was a good comrade, and that she should forgive me for what I suffered." He briefly squeezed my fingers. My tears flowed uncontrollably.

We were separated. I was taken to the North Dressing Room, which was closer to the Greek Gate. When I got there I saw some familiar faces, including Elena Gálvez¹⁸² ,

181. Chile and Bolivia maintain a conflict dating back to the War of the Pacific, which began in 1879, where Chile annexed territory originally belonging to Bolivia, leaving the latter without access to the sea.

182. Dr. Laura Elena Gálvez was detained in the National Stadium and later also transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility.

Dr. Elena, in addition
to being

beautiful, she was an
incredible woman:

He was discussing the

The conditions we were
in. Really.

I don't know how she got out

She lived there because
she led the women at the
stadium and confronted
the military. I...

He warned me not to
open my mouth! And he was
absolutely right!

the doctor who ran the New Havana Clinic¹⁸³;
Rosa González (partner at that time of Víctor
Toro¹⁸⁴ and leader of La Bandera); Nerina (I
don't remember her last name) and Herminia
Concha¹⁸⁵ (from Recoleta).

Elena Gálvez was kept in a place next to the
dressing room, with two or three others,
because the military men were classist! They made distinct
We, for example, often slept two to a single,
thin mattress. They, on the other hand, had
cots like camping cots. They were treated like
doctors, as was fitting, while "bitches" and
"whores" were the mildest things they called
us, at least in my experience. I don't know if
they let her bring clothes—she always looked
so pretty!—but I and many others only had the
clothes on our backs, not even a change of
underwear. It was a tragedy when we got our

periods: we didn't have sanitary pads! We managed with showers and toilet paper.

Dr. Elena, besides being beautiful, was an incredible woman: She discussed the
conditions we were in. I really don't know how she got out of there alive, because
she led the women in the stadium and confronted the soldiers. She warned me
not to open my mouth—and she was absolutely right! When I first saw her, I told
her they were going to execute my father; they had known each other for many years. “Maybe

183. The Nueva Habana Camp emerged as a result of a land occupation promoted by the
Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR) in 1970 as part of the popular power strategy adopted by
this organization.

184. We found no further information about Rosa González. Víctor Toro was head of the
January 26 Camp and a member of the MIR Central Committee. In some documents, he
is recognized as the first popular leader of national scope.

185. Herminia Concha was a leader in the La Pincoya community in Huechuraba, where
she promoted the organization of the “Homeless” and, together with 17 companions, a First Aid Post.
Together with Víctor Toro, she formed the Revolutionary Settlers' Movement (MPR), one
of the mass fronts of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR). After the coup d'état of
September 11, 1973, Herminia was imprisoned and later went into exile in Sweden.
Shortly afterward, she traveled to Nicaragua. In the early 1980s, she returned to Chile
and settled in La Pincoya, where she continued her activism. She died on June 6, 2009.

"To touch the old man, but strange things are happening here, girl, it's hard to know what will happen," her words reassured me.

While I was there, I met a woman, I think she was a teacher, and she had a very kind way of treating people. I also remember there was a German woman, about 45 years old, who seemed to speak very little Spanish. I was struck by the fact that she was always alone. We were allowed to go out to the courtyard, where the pool was, and we could walk around and stretch our legs, but she never came out. She also never left the changing room for lunch. I never saw her speak to anyone. There were also some very young girls who worked at a factory. They were mistreated quite a bit because they were thought to have information and didn't want to talk, but the problem was that the poor things didn't know anything.

We, those of us who had met before, pretended we didn't know each other. There was distrust there, suspicion; nobody asked many questions. Those of us who were truly activists didn't identify as such. I, for example, didn't even say I was an Allende supporter.

We, those of us who had seen each other before, pretended not to notice. We knew each other. There was mistrust. There, suspicion, nobody did much Questions. Who we really were We militants do not identify as Such. I, for example, didn't even say I was an Allende supporter. In this, I listened to a Tupamaro¹⁸⁶ who had been at my camp before September 11th. He said the coup was imminent and we weren't prepared. He advised me that if I were arrested and wanted to save my life, I shouldn't shout militant slogans or act arrogantly by claiming

to be a revolutionary. "Silvia, you're a woman from the poor neighborhood, you haven't had much education, address them as 'sir,' never call them 'sons of bitches,' feign ignorance, keep a low profile. Don't get the urge to start organizing people there!" he instructed me.

I followed his advice and perhaps that's why I'm alive.

186. Tupamaros refers to members of the National Liberation Movement-Tupamaros of Uruguay, which was founded in 1965 and adhered to the political-military struggle as part of the New Left. In June 1973, after the coup in Uruguay, some of these militants sought refuge in Chile, where Salvador Allende was still in power, and many of them experienced the coup d'état of September of that same year.

We had a guard from the north. I remember them as very humane, starting with the lieutenant in charge, whom we ended up calling "El Papi."¹⁸⁷ He was somewhat older and would go to people's homes to leave information about us because, all things considered, our families knew nothing. I remember that the Palestro sisters were also detained during that time.¹⁸⁸ Their truck had been confiscated, and "El Papi" rescued it for them.

There was also a military man at the stadium named Allende; I don't remember his rank, but he was more powerful than "El Papi." His family members would stand near the fence and throw little things to us, like cigarettes or a piece of fruit, and he'd let us go one at a time, running crouching low, to pick up the package. Then we One day we were doing that when Colonel Espinoza, an old man with a prominent chin who was in charge of the entire stadium, came in. He punished us and the whole guard. After that, they changed it .

On the last day of our shift at the northern guard post, we detainees wrote a poem for "El Papi's" wife: "The human qualities of your husband..." Elena Gálvez¹⁹⁰ was the first to write and the one who inspired us. I don't remember where we got the paper, but we all thanked her. We even signed her helmet, just like that, in ti

187. "El Papi" refers to the Sub-Officer in charge of the Antofagasta Regiment, Rolando López, who is remembered for the humane treatment he and the conscripts under his command showed to the women detained in the National Stadium.

188. Refers to Sandra and Sonia Palestro.

189. Other interviewees have mentioned that guard duty was assigned for a specific period of time (two to three weeks, for example), so that no links were established with the detainees.

190. This same event is recounted by Dr. Elena Gálvez: "One of the people I slept with was a 20-year-old girl who came from Arica. She was badly punished, badly beaten when she first arrived [...]. Well, this girl would talk to the lieutenant, who was the head of the guard [...]. She was 20 and he was 21, and they fell in love. At night the lieutenant would come, lock the gate, and she would say to me, 'Elena, may I talk for a little while?' 'Okay,' I would say, 'but not for long.' So the gate was closed, the lieutenant had locked it, and she would stand here, in this little spot, and they would make out through the gate, [...] and after a while they would go back inside and say goodbye. He went to visit her parents, and then he retired from the army. But it was a love like that, they fell in love, things that happen."

There was a girl who fell in love with a military man, and Elena would let her go out to the door of the Dressing Room for a little while so she could be with him.¹⁹¹ Later I learned, from other people who had seen her, that they had ended up getting married.

I never imagined I would leave the stadium. I arrived there in mid-October and they released me a few days before they closed it; I don't remember the exact day.

What I do remember vividly is that November 18th or 19th was a very harsh day of torture. They took almost all of us who were community leaders.

We all ended up looking bad, but Herminia Concha's face was deformed by the blows.

General Espinoza had warned us that we couldn't report mistreatment, or things like the fact that sometimes the food came fermented, but he was surprised: the women who had been interrogated days before still had

the footprints in our body and an older classmate took off her clothes and confronted him directly a uniformed officer.

As I said before, the physical violence was accompanied by horrible insults, a grotesque, sexist vocabulary. Everything was called "whore," and calling us mothers was the mildest insult. The treatment we received was inhumane. I won't go into detail because I think there's plenty written about the torture, but I do want to emphasize that many of us were in such a state that we had to be carried out on stretchers.

The place where they tortured us was far from the dressing room, but we wanted our comrades in the galleries to see us walking and resisting: As we passed, some of us even raised our left arms like

Greetings.

During those days, the International Red Cross also arrived. They gave us more mattresses and even a small stove with something to heat things up.

191. This same event is recounted by Dr. Elena Gálvez: "One of the people I slept with was a 20-year-old girl who came from Arica. She was badly punished, badly beaten when she first arrived [...]. Well, this girl would talk to the lieutenant, who was the head of the guard [...]. She was 20 and he was 21, and they fell in love. At night the lieutenant would come and lock the gate, and she would say to me, 'Elena, may I talk for a little while?' 'Okay,' I would say, 'but not for long.' So the gate was closed, the lieutenant had locked it, and she would stand here, in this little spot, and they would make out through the gate, [...] and after a while they would go back inside and say goodbye. He went to visit her parents, and then he retired from the army. But it was a love like that, they fell in love, things that happen."

water. General Espinoza had warned us that we couldn't report mistreatment, or things like the fact that, sometimes, the food came fermented, but he was surprised: the women who had been interrogated days before still had the marks on us.

Our body and an older female colleague took off her clothes and confronted a uniformed officer directly.

She said, "I recognize your voice. Look what you did to me, and I could be your grandmother." Then, the rest of us showed our bodies too. General Espinoza's chin

was trembling, but he couldn't do anything at that moment.

Then he punished us. We had to stay locked in the changing rooms, I don't remember how many days, and we couldn't go out to get some sun.

Usually in the locker room, to keep morale up, we tried to sing softly, especially when "El Papi" was there. We even sang protest songs! However, on days when there had been torture, no one made a sound. In those circumstances, they left us our mattresses to sleep on alone and put blankets on them. Also, each of us had saved a little bit of food to share. When we were like that, all we wanted was a cup of tea or something, and our companions would find ways to get us a little bit. Elena Gálvez was in charge of looking after us. There was another doctor too, but we all trusted Elena.

Among the prisoners was a woman we were convinced was a spy. She received packages through the military containing chocolates, the famous northern nougat, small jars of olives from Azapa, and things like that. It was obvious she was a "daddy's girl."

There were others that were also like that; the difference lay in the level of commitment they had. Furthermore, it was no coincidence that she was the one creating tension among the inmates: she would say things like, for example: Did you notice how so-and-so looked at you?, or Did you realize that she came out of the bathroom when you came in? So, we started keeping an eye on her.

One day, two other colleagues and I organized ourselves to expropriate the food she had stored: one of us distracted her outside, and the other two of us took it out.

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they had.

The things. Then we divided them up. Nobody knew where they came from or who had made them. I was close to some of them, whom—quite casually—I persuaded not to report it. My two accomplices did the same with other women. It was great! She complained, and some of the other women replied, "What do you think? That we're thieves?" We added, "She thinks that because we come from a poor neighborhood..." In those situations, we always used the word "dignity." Luckily, she didn't accuse us, and nobody said anything, but afterward, she hardly ever left the dressing room.

Later, she herself began to approach us and tell us that she was suffering: "My mom cries a lot."

But my mom was crying for me too, and I was barefoot. They'd taken my shoes when I entered the stadium because they thought I had information there. Through "El Papi," I was able to tell my mom to try and get me a pair. And she, my poor old mother, brought me some plastic sandals and threw them over the fence. One of the soldiers came up and checked the bundle with the sharp end of his bayonet and cut them. I spent the whole time in the stadium barefoot. On the days I had my period, I couldn't take any more of the cold.

While I was there, some strange things happened. For example, one day the soldiers came to the locker room asking who knew how to type; there weren't any computers back then. They were looking for people to help them with the forms, and at least four young women agreed. Some of us thought this was suspicious, but Elena Gálvez told us not to think they were snitches: "These soldiers don't know how to do things and they need some technical help," she said.

I'll take this opportunity to mention that at the stadium, we were identified by a letter based on how "dangerous" we were. I was among those considered threatening because I came from the Nueva Habana camp. By then, they knew and had begun torturing me because of my role within the community. So, Elena, I, and a few others were convinced they were going to send us to concentration camps.

For men there was Chacabuco 192, but what were they going to do with the women? The solution was to transfer them to La Correccional.

As I said, I never thought they would grant me my freedom. Around 11 a.m. they sent me to get my things, but I had absolutely nothing. "Take

192. The Chacabuco Prison Camp "was one of the largest in the country." It was located at the Chacabuco Nitrate Works, about 110 kilometers from Antofagasta. It operated from the beginning of November 1973 until April 1975. It was for men only. It housed "about a thousand political prisoners."

I never thought they'd
give me my freedom. Like
at 11 a.m.
They sent for me
my things, but I had
absolutely nothing
Nothing. "Take this
"I remember," a
soldier said
mockingly, handing
me a piece of
blanket. I took it and
folded it. Later I said, "Wh
The truth is, at that
moment I
It shattered all my
expectations: I didn't expect
to survive.

"This souvenir," a soldier said mockingly,
handing me a piece of blanket. I took it and
folded it. Later I kept saying, "Why didn't I
throw it away?" The truth is, at that moment
all my expectations were shattered: I didn't
expect to get out alive. Around 11:30 or
12:00, maybe, I left the stadium.

A friend gave me her sandals, which were
about two sizes too big, and someone gave
me some elastic bands to hold them up. I
didn't have money for the bus. Since there
were always a lot of people waiting outside,
hoping to find their relatives, I approached
a woman—with the piece of blanket under
my arm. I told her I was just leaving. She
was looking for her son, so I couldn't help
her with information about whether he was
inside or not. She gave me more money
than I needed for the fare and added, "Take
it, because you never know."

I had just showered, because they allowed us to use the showers, but I was
wearing the same clothes I'd had for over a month. I went to my mom's house in
the neighborhood because I had nowhere else to go. When I got there, I found my
daughter with a swollen face and a toothache. I changed my clothes and took her
to the clinic. Since I wanted to see people, I walked through the side streets. On
the way, many people were afraid even to look at me, but there were also those
who came out to hug me. At the clinic, my coworkers pretended not to recognize
me, but as soon as the director went to another office, they came up to me. They
saw my daughter, and I went back home. It all happened very quickly; it probably took me about

Around three in the morning, we woke up to the sound of cars and lights on the
house. We were just getting out of bed when they started kicking down the door.
They were coming to get me again from Puente Alto. According to them, I had
stirred things up: several walls had been covered in graffiti with MIR slogans and pamphlets.
In my defense, I claimed that I had only taken my daughter to the dentist: "I didn't
stop to talk to anyone, because people didn't want to talk to me," I said.

Anyway, they took me. I was scared, because I already knew they were brutal there. I lose track of time a bit, but I think they held me for about three days. They weren't just interrogating me about "Mike" anymore, but about my membership in the MIR, my leadership in Nueva Habana, my work in healthcare. One of the torturers said to me, "You like our hotel, don't you?" "You liked how we treated you." I think they said that because I was raped there. Then it all started again: tying me to the cot, electrocuting me, and so on.

From there I was transferred to the Women's Correctional Facility, where I believe I was for part of December and until approximately mid-March.

For 21 days I was kept in isolation in a very, very small cell. According to the nun, I was left there for "reflection." There was only one chair and no bed.

In the morning they would take me to the bathroom and give me a glass of water with a piece of bread. Exactly the same thing was repeated in the afternoon.

I noticed that in the afternoons, the detainees prayed to a statue of the Virgin Mary there. I wasn't religious, but I thought, "If I tell her I want to go outside to pray, maybe I'll be out for a little while." I reflected on my inconsistency, but my human side won out, the need to get some fresh air, some sunshine. The nun was Italian and very reactionary: for her, all of us who were political prisoners were communists. And she, obviously, hated communism. Although she wasn't entirely convinced that I was a believer, she allowed me to go out twice a week, for 15 minutes each time. While I prayed, she stood nearby. I pretended to be so happy! Since I didn't know the prayers, I stayed a little behind, repeating what the others were saying.

The cell had a door with a small grille at the top. That was the only source of light, so it was almost pitch black. At times, I would succumb to sleep. I sometimes found cigarette butts and matchsticks in some holes in the wall. Other women who had been there before me must have left them. I was alone, I had no sense of time, and I learned to smoke. I would take one or two drags and put it away. I don't know if any of the other political prisoners passed money to me, but the guards, when the nun wasn't there, would also leave me cigarettes and matches.

Later, my companions told me that they had a very good relationship with the guards and that the guards did them favors.¹⁹³ In fact, it was easier to deal with us than with the common prisoners in the other yard, where fights often broke out.

.....
193. It refers to favors.

I've always had the habit
of taking the

I eat the crumb of the bread
and only the crust. Being

There in the cell, he did it,
and little bits fell to the floor.

One day, I remember, I saw
a couple of tiny lights.

I don't know if it was a mouse or

The mouse was there,
but I felt less alone. I think the
little animal noticed.

that I did not reject it.

I've always had the habit of taking the crumb out
of the bread and eating only the crust. While I
was in the cell, I did that, and little bits fell to the
floor. One day, I remember, I saw a couple of tiny
lights. I don't know if it was a mouse or a weevil,
but I felt less alone. I think the little creature
realized I didn't reject it. After that, I threw it
crumbs, and we kind of became friends: I talked
to it. "Am I going crazy?" I wondered.

I also remember that once the policewoman went
to work with her three-month-old baby. And that
little baby was crying without...

I stopped. I knocked on my iron door. I told her I
had worked at the Well-Child Clinic and started asking her questions. I asked if I could see him.
She opened the door and brought him closer. I touched his ears and the baby let out a horrible
scream. I recommended she put a few drops of warm breast milk in his ear and then put some
cotton balls and something warm over it, like a hat or a blanket tied up. She did, and after about
20 minutes he fell asleep. She grew very fond of me. Every time the nun went to teach her
classes, she would open the door a crack for me. Of course, I had to pretend I was going to the
bathroom, in case someone saw me and told the nun. For me, every ray of sunlight was a
miracle. I've always loved the sun, but after that confinement, I adored it.

Just as I was completing 21 days of isolation, a law professor arrived with his group of students.
Luckily, the nun wasn't there, and the female officer who liked me was on duty. They asked her
if there were any political prisoners in that section, and she said yes. They asked to see me. She
set up a table and a couple of chairs and brought me out.

We talked for about two hours: I told them I knew nothing about my two little ones and my
mother, that my father was in prison and I didn't know where; and I told them everything I had
experienced during the detentions. I cried a lot. First, because that's how it felt, I was very sad,
it was the first time I could talk calmly; and also a little because I thought, "Maybe they'll be
more moved and help me." But, really, I was in a terrible situation, isolated from the world in
every possible way. Then the nun arrived, the professor introduced himself, but she immediately
ordered me to be locked up. One of the students told her that she was violating the treaties and
that they had a record of the conditions I was in. She

When I was in La Correccional prison, my mother, through the Pro-Peace Committee, managed to get me lawyers. They kept arresting me, torturing me, and never taking me to the Prosecutor's Office. Getting there was vital, because it established my status as a political prisoner.

Finally, they succeeded.

He replied that he was following orders. The thing is, two days later he sent me to the political prisoners' yard, with free rein. That Commission made it possible.

In the courtyard I think there were about 80 political prisoners, or maybe a little more. It was a different life there: they didn't torture us.

We met again with Herminia Concha, I saw María Emilia Tijoux¹⁹⁴ and Nieves Ayress¹⁹⁵.

There were other women who came from the stadium, but I didn't know many of them. We were allowed to watch television for two hours there.

There was a large plot of land, and some ideas came up for growing vegetables for ourselves.

However, some argued that it was working for free for the dictatorship. Personally, I thought it was a

form of therapy, and what we grew would be very useful.

When I was in La Correccional, my mother, through the Pro Peace Committee¹⁹⁶,

He managed to get me lawyers. Because I was being stopped here and there, I

.....
¹⁹⁴. María Emilia Tijoux is also on the list of women detained at the National Stadium.

¹⁹⁵. At the time of her arrest, Nieves Ayress was studying Arts and Journalism at the University of Chile and was a member of the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left). She was taken to the National Stadium, where she was held in solitary confinement for about two weeks. She was then arrested again and taken to the Londres 38 torture center, and from there transferred, in February 1974, to Tejas Verdes. In April 1974, she was moved to the Women's Prison and then to Tres Álamos. She remained imprisoned until December 1976, when she was deported.

¹⁹⁶. The Cooperation Committee for Peace in Chile was established on October 6, 1973, in response from representatives of the Catholic, Evangelical (Methodist, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran, Orthodox, and Pentecostal Methodist), Jewish community, and World Council of Churches, to assist those experiencing human rights violations committed in Chile after the military coup of September 11, 1973. The ecumenical committee was chaired by Monsignor Fernando Ariztia Ruiz and directed by Jesuit priest Fernando Salas. It provided legal, economic, technical, and spiritual assistance to those suffering political persecution. Its department for assisting the families of the disappeared served 8,718 people during its two years of operation. "The action undertaken by this institution caused deep unease in the upper political spheres of the military dictatorship," so that on November 11, 1975, Augusto Pinochet, through a letter addressed to Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez, requested its dissolution, leading to the end of the institution.

They tortured me and never took me to the Prosecutor's Office. Getting there was vital, as it would establish my status as a political prisoner. Finally, they succeeded. They took me to the Prosecutor's Office located around Alameda, very close to UNCTAD¹⁹⁷.

I was cleared of all charges in the health-related accusations.

Once outside the office, the lawyers told me to take the bus across the street. We said our goodbyes. I was crossing Alameda Avenue when a van stopped and they pulled me in. They were from the Chilean Air Force (FACH), which at that time we knew as AGA¹⁹⁸. They forced me to lower my head. I couldn't see the road, but it was far away. We arrived at a place that was open countryside; there were no houses or anything nearby. That's where, supposedly, the MIR specialists were. They put me in a room full of small cots, like a basement with little windows just above ground level. They left me there alone, sitting in a chair, without saying a word. A long time passed: "I'm not getting out of here, not this time," I thought as I bit my nails.

A door opened. I glanced sideways, because my head was down, slumped.

I recognized the leader of the MIR Political Commission that they brought in. He was in bad shape, his jaw was drooping, he was holding his pants up, it was clear he was coming out of torture. I wanted to go and hug him, but I couldn't. They asked him, "Is this Mike's mistress?" "I don't know," he said. They hit him. I gestured with my hands while saying, "How long is this going to go on? How long are you going to keep this up?!" I did it so he would know I hadn't said anything. They continued: "Did I know her?" "Yes," he said. When he confirmed it, I felt my stomach clench. And he added, "I met this woman at the clinic. One night I had a terrible stomach ache, she was on duty and gave me sulfa drugs." When he addressed me as "ma'am"—and not "colleague"—I felt relieved. In those days, little things worked like codes. They asked me if I knew him. I replied that so many people came through the clinic that it was impossible to remember faces. That's when I took the opportunity to send him a message.

And I added, "Besides, my husband doesn't let me get involved in anything." After that, they took him out of the room and questioned me alone.

197. The UNCTAD building is currently located at the Gabriela Mistral Cultural Center (GAM). It was built during the Popular Unity government, with thousands of volunteers working to complete it in just 275 days. It hosted the Third World Conference on Trade and Development.

198. Air War Academy AGA place where torture took place after the coup in Chile.

199. We believe it could be the community leader Victor Toro, who was arrested and tortured at the AGA in April 1974.

There were things I did have to admit, for example, that I stood guard at the camp. I often joked that I was going to be expelled because I didn't participate in the meetings, that my husband controlled me and didn't like me talking to other people. But there were also other, more delicate questions, and that's when they started hitting me with their rifle butts; I even ended up with a broken rib.

In that place they also did what they called "the submarine" to me: they covered your...

They put black plastic bags over your head and submerged it in the water. The bag stuck to your face and you could barely breathe. I thought I was going to have a heart attack.

I don't know how long they kept me under the most brutal torture, but I remember they took me out of that room and into another where there was a guy they called "El Manchita" or "El Manchao." I don't remember his name, but he had a large mole or a sort of purplish mark on his face. They put the blindfold on me just as they were about to start torturing me, but I saw him as soon as I arrived.

That time they played tricks on me, like pushing me to make me walk faster, telling me to turn around and run into the walls—ridiculous things that made them laugh. They must have kept me there for a couple of days. They released me and told me, "You're going to have to sign in every Sunday in Puente Alto." The mere mention of Puente Alto made my hair stand on end.

That time they played tricks on me, like pushing me to make me walk faster, telling me to turn around and run into the walls—ridiculous things that made them laugh. They must have kept me there for a couple of days. They released me and told me, "You're going to have to sign in every Sunday in Puente Alto." The mere mention of Puente Alto made my hair stand on end.

One of them took me out in a Jeep. On the way we passed some machines, it seemed they were for plowing, because it was a large field, and they had several tines.

He stopped: "I'm regretting giving you a ride, I think I'll take you through that machine first," he said. I looked at him and swallowed the urge to answer. "You were scared," he continued. I didn't answer again. He resumed driving. He dropped me off at a place where public transportation passed. I meant to tell him I didn't have money for the bus, but a second later I thought it was silly. I had no idea where I was. A bus came and I got on. My clothes were covered in blood. "I have to get to La Florida, but I don't have any money," I told the driver. I was afraid to tell him I was going to Camp Nueva Habana. I think he felt sorry for me, because he said, "Sit here, young lady," and

He pointed to a seat near him. We were far away, but he dropped me off at a crossroads where a bus passed by that I could use, and he gave me money for the fare. I arrived in La Florida, familiar territory for me.

I was back at the camp again. After the first night, I tried to find another place to stay. However, my mother and I decided it would be worse if I went underground. They had threatened to take her away before. I was under house arrest, but I realized they only checked on me once a week. They had taken my documents, and it was dangerous to be stopped and go around without my ID, so I started going to other neighborhoods looking for contacts in the MIR. That's where I found out that "Mike" had been murdered. The leaders of the political directorate who weren't dead were either imprisoned or underground. I finally found one. He advised me to go to the chapel in La Victoria, saying they could help me there. This was a very militant neighborhood, and the day I went, they were raiding it. I didn't even get off the bus. Later, I learned they had taken the priest.

Those leaders of the political leadership who weren't dead were either imprisoned or in hiding. I finally found one.

He advised me to go to the chapel in La Victoria, saying they could help me there. This was a very resilient community, and the day I went they were raiding it. I didn't even get off the bus.

Later I learned that they had taken the priest away.

I consulted the leader again. This time he told me to go directly to the Civil Registry downtown. If I was required to sign in weekly, it was likely my situation was up to date and my paperwork was "clean," he explained. I followed his advice. I gave my name at the counter, they looked me up in the records, and then they told me, "Wait a moment." T

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200. Refers to Alejandro Villalobos, population leader of the Nueva Habana camp.

201. Miguel Enríquez Frodden, founder and Secretary General of the Revolutionary Left Movement (MIR), was killed in a confrontation with the DINA on October 5, 1974.

202. A neighborhood located in the south-central part of Santiago, in the Pedro Aguirre Cerda district. It originated in October 1957, when families from the so-called "Cordón de la Miseria" (Cord of Poverty) along the Zanjón de la Aguada riverbank occupied the land of the La Feria farm. It was famous for its resistance to the military coup and the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet. During a protest by residents in 1984 against the military regime, the French priest André Jarlan was killed by a military bullet.

I had a hunch, but I didn't leave. If they'd spotted me, there was no escape. While these thoughts were swirling around me, a Captain appeared, showed me his badge, and warned me not to try to flee. They thought I was there on a mission to keep an eye on who was working there.

They arrested me. He and a woman took me in a car. We drove for about 20 minutes, maybe less, I don't know, it's hard to calculate in those circumstances. I could never identify where we arrived. I had so many pieces. A man interrogated me, sat down across from me, offered me coffee, addressed me as "ma'am," told me to cooperate, and said he knew I had already undergone several "treatments" (Ha! He called them "treatments"). He added that he thought they had arrested the wrong person, but that he needed to confirm some information. The questions had nothing to do with the camp or the MIR, and I had to tell him I had no idea what he was talking about. He reiterated, with the same calmness I'm using now: "Ma'am, you'd better cooperate." I admitted that I was an employee of the National Health Service and that I knew the names of the doctors he mentioned, but I didn't know anything else. And it was true.

They put me in a very clean place, with a bed and a small table with a chair, and they brought my food there. There was no bathroom. The first time I asked to be taken to one, I did so hoping to see someone. I didn't see a single person. I must have been there for about a week, maybe a little longer.

After being released, I decided to go talk to a priest in La Legua. I stayed overnight there. He was going to perform a baptism for the Colombian Embassy, and they were going to take me out in the embassy car as a guest of the relatives. I changed my mind and didn't want to go. I didn't want to leave Chile, partly because many of us said that "we had to keep fighting," but also because I was terrified.

I made contact with a Belgian priest who took me to a retreat house somewhere near Padre Hurtado, I think. It was completely solitary. I couldn't stand it. Then, I spent two days in the chapel, and after that, he took me and about eight other people to the Apostolic Nun. We all had in common that we had been arrested several times. That's where I came out to Sweden. I had to leave without any of my family. They gave me a few minutes at the airport to say goodbye to my mother. I couldn't see my children or my father, who was still imprisoned in Puchuncaví.

I had never flown before. I had met some Swedes once who made a film at our camp, but I really had no idea where I was going. I was only in fifth grade, and my knowledge of Europe was practically nonexistent. I was going

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We were terrified. There were three of us in the same situation. They had taken us out at five o'clock.

We left the Nunciature in the morning, and then we went without breakfast. I think the plane left at eight, and a little while later they came around with food. We were hungry, but we refused it: we didn't know it was included in the ticket price.

The flight stopped in Argentina. We had to get off. We knew about the dictatorship and the persecution in that country. I was terrified! I told one of my companions, "Let's always stay where there are other people." We were poorly dressed. We had nothing but the clothes on our backs. We stuck to a group; they'd go into a shop, and we'd follow behind.

Until one of them confronted us angrily: "What do you want?!" I told him the truth: "We're being expelled from the country for political reasons; we're afraid they'll kidnap us here." They were humanitarian people,

because they protected us: they put us in the center of the group and offered us a little coffee. When we were about to board again, I asked them how much a meal on the plane cost. They explained that it was free, so later, when we were already on the plane and lunchtime arrived, we accepted everything they gave us. We ate some and put the rest in a small bag. We had no idea what condition we were in when we arrived.

I landed in Sweden with my little bag in my hand.

I arrived on April 30th or 31st, 1975. I was due to arrive on May 1st, and I didn't want to sleep that night. At dawn, I went out to explore. I saw the first demonstrations by the Unified Workers' Central, and others by political parties and movements. In Sweden, I encountered a different world. I began to reconnect with familiar faces, comrades from Uruguay, Brazil, and Bolivia who had been in Nueva Habana before the coup. I got involved in various activities and haven't stopped since.

At first I maintained my political activism, but very soon I entered into disagreements.

The MIR advocated "no to asylum," but I had seen the prisons, the conditions, and what life was like inside. The repression was devastating everything. It wasn't true that the Resistance Committees could do anything. There weren't 10,000 committees resisting!

There was something fantastical about those speeches, and in that sense, I disputed them. Who

Who were resisting? Our mothers, the wives of the disappeared prisoners, under the wing of the church, they were the ones resisting! Their resistance was organizing themselves as a way to exert pressure.

They told me I'd arrived demoralized and that they understood. Then, when I became more persistent and started visiting organizations and giving my version of what was happening in Chile, the rumor started that I'd been an agent of the dictatorship. The proof: They'd arrested me and released me time and time again. I mean, all that I went through, and then they disrespected me with such nonsense?! No! It was unacceptable!

I began to delve deeper into my reflection, analyzing and questioning many things. Why the defeat? Certainly the Imperialism was powerful and interfered, but the left and those of us who were part of it also had responsibilities. The black market wasn't just run by the right.

Although it is sad to say, there were people who, while standing next to Allende, were also doing their own business.

I began to deepen my reflection, I analyzed and questioned many things.

Why the defeat? Certainly, imperialism was powerful and interfered, but the left and those of us who were part of it also bore responsibility. The black market.

It wasn't just the right wing doing it.

Although it's sad to say, there were people who, while standing by Allende, were also conducting their own business. Not all of them, but some were, and that worked against the project; it didn't contribute to the process the country was going through.

I broke with the MIR, but not with the social movements. I continued working. Along with many other people, we formed an organization

called the Latin American Fund, dedicated to freeing political prisoners from Chile, but also from Uruguay, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina. I was also part of the Chile Committee, or Committee for Chile, an organization formed by Swedes as a way to support the Allende government and, later, to show solidarity against the dictatorship.

Over time, I became involved in the struggles of the Swedish people. They weren't numerous, but they existed and primarily consisted of anti-imperialist actions. Within this context, I had a beautiful and important experience with the indigenous people of Sweden and Norway. While in exile, I also managed to obtain my nursing assistant diploma and supported the rehabilitation of war veterans with disabilities, joining a health clinic.

In the latter, I worked with foreign women, trying to show them the importance of organizing to fight for their rights. This led to anti-racist and anti-fascist work. Later, I began to join rural Indigenous women's movements and La Vía Campesina, an international organization. I participated in courses on Cooperativism and Popular Education and was able to live for a few months in Salvador, where I learned about the Peace Process. I also had the opportunity to go to Turkey and attend an event organized by women activists and guerrillas from Kurdistan.

I was always involved in the struggle against the dictatorship, supporting the families of the disappeared and those executed. As former political prisoners, we had never demanded anything, so in 2003 we organized ourselves as such. With the creation of the Valech Commission, our group worked responsibly to convince many people to give their testimonies. We presented 400 cases, including Colombian and Swedish comrades who had been imprisoned in Chile.

For me, the Valech Report represented recognition of the survivors of the dictatorship. I testified because it is part of a history that must be told and known by new generations. The return to democracy meant "truth, justice, and reparation," and in a way, this was what the Valech Report sought to achieve.

Our groups submitted programs based on international agreements in these three areas; however, many of these arguments were never considered.

The bitterness and indignation intensified when Ricardo Lagos signed the 50-year period of silence,²⁰³ thereby concealing the names of the perpetrators. Those of us who testified had already endured 30 years of being ignored. It wasn't easy having to unpack a backpack full of sad and painful memories. We saw people die under torture, we saw our lives shattered, we saw and lived through exile, the separation of families, the shattering of dreams, loneliness and uprooting, the dismantling of the world we were building and the loss of our hopes for changing society.

203. The decree establishing the Valech Commission stipulated that all compiled information would be classified as "confidential." The final report recommended that this secrecy be maintained for 30 years. In 2004, President Ricardo Lagos lobbied to extend the confidentiality period to 50 years. In 2016, a bill was debated to lift the secrecy before the agreed-upon term. However, there is no single position on the issue: some see it as a way to contribute to truth and justice in pending human rights violation cases by providing information about the perpetrators; others question it as an affront to the privacy and dignity of the victims and their families. Although it was rejected by the Chamber of Deputies, the debate remains open, even among those who testified.

As a survivor, I feel that something has been done, but not everything that could have been. I can't believe that the Pinochet-era Constitution is still in place today, that human rights violation cases are in the hands of the...

Military justice instead of ordinary justice; the appointment of ambassadors who collaborated with the dictatorship; doctors who participated in torture working in hospitals—I could go on giving examples. Some say we're still filled with hatred and rage, and that this isn't helping the country heal its wounds. More than hatred, I feel powerlessness. The so-called "democratic" governments haven't lived up to expectations.

Before Truth, Justice and Reparation, they have safeguarded commitments to the Armed Forces, which continue to have great power.

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examples along these lines.

Compared to the thousands of comrades who died, I believe I am privileged to have survived. I saved my life by going into exile. From that moment on, I made a commitment to raise my voice whenever necessary.

That's why I remain an active social activist. I learned something beautiful when I left: borders ceased to be relevant, and the causes I champion are no longer solely about Chile.

I am 72 years old, I have had two cancer surgeries, and although my body aches, I forget about it if I have to go to a march or paint a sign. It has been and is the best therapy I've ever had. I've made the fight for rights my reason for living. That gives me strength. My energy also comes from my connection to Indigenous peoples. My roots are from the Indigenous people of the Andean highlands, whom, for various reasons, I haven't known much about. However, since the mid-1980s, I've had the opportunity to learn about and become involved in the struggle of the Mapuche people. When I'm in Chile, I'm in Wallmapu, where I've been accepted and welcomed. Living in the communities, I've tried to learn about their dignity, as well as the history and struggles of other sister peoples. There is so much we don't know, so much that

I learned. There I found a spirituality that I lacked when I was just a party militant.

I don't mean to say that we shouldn't continue discussing issues like class, the kind of world we want, or the socialism we hope for. Those things should matter to us, but we should also be concerned with issues like climate change.

Our planet is being destroyed. Neoliberals don't seem to care; unfettered capitalism is ravaging Mother Earth through extractive industries. Ordinary people, the vast majority of the world's population, are paying the price. How do we act in the face of all these things?

But beyond these concerns, I am a daughter (my mother is still alive), a mother, a grandmother, an aunt, a mother-in-law, and a woman trying to pass on her experience. The reason I speak now is because I feel a responsibility to leave a message for future generations and keep the flame of solidarity alive. I raise my voice for all those silenced by Pinochet's genocidal regime, and for the political prisoners in Chile and around the world. No one can be forgotten. Historical memory must always be present.

“YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING
POSITIVE, A LEARNING OF
THIS AND KEEP GOING UP”



Nuria Núñez Rius²⁰⁴

In 1965, I graduated from the Manuel de Salas High School. It was a politically turbulent time, and my school had a very active student council, deeply engaged with the country's events. The school was a progressive, secular institution that encouraged you to develop many skills you didn't even know you possessed. In fact, during that time, I studied theater and the arts. I was part of a diverse student body.

In my class, for example, there were children of the progressive intellectual classes of Chile and people like me, who came from a family of merchants from Ñuñoa.

²⁰⁴. This story originates from interviews conducted by Isidora Salinas in Santiago, Chile, on June 28 and July 10, 2018.

I'm the first generation in my family to finish high school. I'm also the eldest granddaughter. My grandparents are of Spanish, Catalan, origin. They came from a life of migration, the kind you read about in books: at the age of 12, my grandfather was sent alone on a ship to America. He arrived in Buenos Aires, without family, illiterate at that time, and so on. I won't go into detail, but that's also your story, the one you know, where you see the effort, the work, the economic ups and downs.

I was 17 when I graduated from high school; I was just a kid. Although I was accepted into the University of Chile to study Psychology after taking the entrance exams, my immediate goal was to work. I'm the only girl in my family; I have two younger brothers, and I wanted to discover new things. I was restless and curious.

My parents, who are still alive, were secular, open-minded, and not highly educated, and they didn't impose too many restrictions on me. My mother played an important role in my transition to adulthood. She always wanted to study, but because of the circumstances of her life, being the daughter of immigrants, she had to leave school to work, leaving her with the unfulfilled desire to get an education. The money she earned was saved by her father, my grandfather. She saved what little she had, sacrificing many necessities. Her experience became an incentive for me, motivating me to get an education and instilling in me the desire to improve my life.

As I said, I wanted to enter the workforce, so I prepared myself for it: I studied secretarial skills at the Catholic University, a prestigious school for young ladies. This allowed me to obtain

Within the framework of the Popular Unity economic program, industries that played a strategic role were to be nationalized, but the social movement went beyond that policy and occupied companies thinking of reconverting them, considering a more significant participation of the workers

something like a university degree, which no longer exists. At 18 or 19, I quickly entered the workforce. I started at the Coca-Cola bottling plant, Embotelladora Andina, located in the San Joaquín district. There were very few women there, all secretaries, and the rest were men who worked in the various stages of beverage production and distribution.

It was around 1968, and I remember I still wasn't voting. I joined the company union, back when things were getting complicated.

The atmosphere was increasingly turbulent. For the women who joined this union, it was like discovering another world, because it was predominantly male. As context, it's important to note that the company's southern boundary was located in the La Legua neighborhood,²⁰⁵ and, consequently, a large number of workers lived there. This area would later become the San Joaquín industrial belt with the arrival of the Popular Unity government.²⁰⁶ For me, this was an unknown neighborhood: I was a girl who lived in the Ñuñoa district.

Over time, I did well in the positions I held at the company. I was also very well-liked by the people, and this helped me to become more involved and politically engaged.

Under the Popular Unity government's economic program, industries playing a strategic role were to be nationalized, but the social movement went beyond that policy and occupied companies with the intention of transforming them, envisioning greater worker participation. They then occupied the bottling plant. The workers' plan was to bottle milk there instead of beverages. These changes, the takeovers, and the occupation process were very violent, and the internal atmosphere became extremely tense. Incidentally, some members of that group were persecuted, and others were forcibly disappeared.

At that time, I had begun to be active in the Socialist Party.

Just when things were getting difficult at the company, I was offered the position of Secretary to the General Manager of Gasco, a nationalized company located in downtown Santiago. This job came about for both political and professional reasons.

The General Manager was a socialist and they were looking for a trustworthy, left-wing activist, and efficient person who knew how to do the job well.

There was a much more structured organization there than in the factory; there was the General Manager, the Administration Manager who was a communist, all of them

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205. It is one of the first settlements in the city of Santiago, founded by its inhabitants, mostly workers from the north and farmers from the central region of the country. The Legua Nueva and La Legua de Emergencia sectors emerged later, between 1947 and 1950, in the context of the city's housing crisis, due to the relocation of residents from a squatter settlement in another part of the city, and in 1951, through the allocation of emergency housing.

206. The industrial belts were conceived as an expression of "popular power." They emerged during the socialist government of Salvador Allende (1970-1973) as a collective reaction of factory workers to the "boycott" and "destabilization" actions promoted by the opposition to Popular Unity.

Engineers. Gasco, unlike Coca-Cola, was part of a political and economic project of the Popular Unity government, a valuable industry for energy distribution. I accepted this new challenge, but by then I wanted to go back to studying. I took advantage of the fact that there was an agreement with the universities at that time, so you could combine studies and work. I wanted to study Economics, but the military coup happened and I couldn't make it happen.

I was very committed to the social and political process. I remember that when we drank the Coca-Cola, we faced a huge problem, both internal and external: the decision was whether to continue or stop. A colleague told me to talk to an "important" person for guidance.

We were all apprentices, very young, with energy and will, but lacking a project, in addition to the difficulty of the lack of support from the more experienced.

The person she introduced me to, "the important one," was a regional leader of the Socialist Party. He supported and advised us throughout our process, and we gradually began a romantic relationship. I fell in love, and years later, he would become the father of my children. This reinforced, let's say, the commitments and things I was doing at that time. I was 20 years old; he was a much more experienced man than I was, a leader in an important area of Santiago, and all of that appealed to me. I started working at Gasco and maintained my relationship with him, living between my parents' house and the one we shared.

During the years of the Popular Unity government, my parents, who were not politically active, represented a middle class rather fearful of what might happen. The propaganda broadcast against Salvador Allende was very persuasive. They were gripped by the terror of losing what little they had, a feeling shared by my aunts, uncles, and grandparents. They experienced it with anguish, holding a different perspective from mine. We disagreed.

On the day of the coup, September 11, 1973, I was downtown, at a coworker's house where I'd stayed the night before. I had a feeling something like this was coming. That morning I told him, "I'm going to Gasco," and I walked through downtown Santiago. It was terrible to see the soldiers in the streets, people hurrying to work; the day was gray and dark. Observing that whole scene was sad and distressing. It was an occupied city. When I arrived, the situation was disconcerting; you could see the fear in all my coworkers, people wandering around without knowing what to do. There was no plan, at least not that I knew of. It was decided that everyone should go home. There was no transportation, so I left.

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I walked alone to my parents' house. Along the way, I
saw planes flying overhead, people running in every
direction, silence in the crowd, confusion, and a lot of
fear on their faces. I arrived at my destination and
waited, hearing nothing. We only had a phone.

fixed (there were no cell phones), there was no plan B.

I stayed at my parents' house for a few days, trying to
get out and see what to do. The political parties were
completely disorganized; there was nowhere to turn.
The community centers, for example, the "little shop"
in Ñuñoa, were occupied by the military.

I don't remember how I contacted my
comrades from the Socialist Party. But, in
Under those circumstances, we went out into the streets to
Looking for people, like going to the plaza to see who I
could find. Exactly like that. That's how I got in touch

with colleagues from Coca-Cola and others more connected to the MIR, whom I already knew. In
that context, I was determined to find my friends and comrades to see how they were doing and
what was going on.

Although there was nothing defined about what needed to be done, it seemed to me that we had to
resist, to work to restructure what was being lost.

We clandestinely searched for people, going out into the streets.

We drove around looking for other people. These actions were carried out spontaneously, mainly
through party networks, relying on existing bonds of trust.

After this initial effort, I took refuge in a safe house, and it was there, in that place, that I was
arrested. By this time, I already knew that several of my colleagues from Gasco and Coca-Cola had
been arrested. To tell the truth, I was in several of these houses; they moved me constantly, and in
this coming and going—in mid-October 1973—I was arrested in the Providencia district. I didn't have
time to

I didn't get to say goodbye to my parents that night. I imagine they must have been terrified.

At the time of my arrest, I felt no fear. At that age, idealism is strong, as is inexperience. You never
think your life is at risk because,

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Idealism is great, as is
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military training, I hadn't robbed
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That October afternoon, the Carabineros
entered the house where I was and arrested
me along with the owners. They took us to
the School
of Carabineros Non-Commissioned
Officers, on Zañartu Street. Once there, I
realized I was part of a group of unknown
people.

The men I saw arrived in very bad shape. I

don't know why, but this group of about twelve of us later became part of a single legal process. I
don't know what logic they used to bring together those of us who arrived that night.

The initial interrogations were very harsh; there was a lot of physical abuse, intimidation, beatings,
and threats. Fear and anguish reigned. This was especially true for one of them. I learned then
that he was Tito Martínez, a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party, who died
recently. His case is brutal: He was beaten with a crowbar, thrown into a hole in the police station
courtyard, and tortured there. After this ordeal, he suffered irreversible damage.

We met again in exile; he was in Denmark and I was in Germany, so we saw each other a couple
of times.

As the hours passed, my partner arrived in custody. I was interrogated, always under threats, and
beaten. Days later, I was allowed to contact my parents.

I couldn't see them because they were holding me incommunicado, but at least I managed to let
them know I was imprisoned. Aside from the intimidation, the beatings, the blows, my memory of
that episode is hazy; I have gaps in my recollection of moments I don't remember much.

At that time, we were labeled as leftist terrorists and received very derogatory terms; however, we
were never accused of anything specific. They asked us about the weapons that we supposedly
possessed.

We possessed the Z207 Plan and other nonsense that did not apply to our case.

Later, a group of about 11 people were transferred to the Investigations Headquarters in General Mackenna; I don't know what happened to the rest.

There, we were taken to the prisoners' gallery. We occupied a tiled area, somewhat like a courtyard, which consisted of two floors with small cells, all packed with people. People arrested in different parts of Santiago arrived there, so I ran into more than one acquaintance.

We women had locked cells, without bars; the door was metal. The interior was small, cold, and dark, and there were so many of us in there. There was a toilet in the middle, dark and eerie. Every time I see movies that show dark hallways, ugh!, I start to remember. In the cell, there was only a small window through which we could see what was happening in the compound; we could see the men because they had a barred door.

There was a constant flow of people coming and going, and I witnessed situations that left a lasting impression on me. They would seat people in the middle of the building, which was like an amphitheater, and publicly humiliate them, degrading them by cutting their hair amidst shouts, threats, and insults. The discourse was one of mistreatment, of terrible abuse. They would cut their hair, shaving only half their heads as part of the ridicule they subjected them to.

After that experience, when my children were born, I never cut their hair.

There, in the Investigations Department, the most systematic torture took place. There were rooms and facilities there for torturing people; they were subjected to electric shocks. Up until that point, I thought what I was going through was temporary, that my situation would be resolved quickly; however, that wasn't the case. After about seven long days filled with mistreatment, I was transferred, along with others, to the National Stadium.

Men and women arrived at the stadium by boat at night. I don't remember the exact day, perhaps around October 20th. I was part of the group that blocked prisoners from entering the stadium. We entered by bus, I think via Avenida Maratón, to what we would now recognize as the Marquesina or Presidential Box area; it was like offices. Later, we were separated by gender. My partner had also been transferred to the stadium.

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207. Plan Zeta is the name given to the alleged plan by Salvador Allende's government to stage an armed insurrection, a self-coup, and thus impose a Marxist government. This hypothetical plan was disseminated by the military officers who carried out the 1973 coup d'état to justify it.

We women were taken on foot to the pool area, to the North Dressing Room.

When we arrived, there were women inside; it was packed. I always felt like there were a lot of us. They were probably awake at that hour because it seemed some of them had been released. We slept on the floor and shared the mats: we'd put two together and three of us would sleep on them. We also shared whatever we could find to cover ourselves. The floor was tiled and cold, the walls were concrete, and the windows didn't close. We were there for about ten days, during what was the final stage of our captivity in the stadium.

We women were taken on foot to the pool area, to the North Dressing Room.

When we arrived there were women inside, it was full, I always had the feeling that there were many of us.

They were probably awake at that hour, because it seems that some of them had been given their freedom.

During that time, we were kept separate from the men, except, for example, on the occasions when couples met up, as was the case for me. I was able to see my partner through a kind soldier.

They could also sometimes manage the transfer of blankets and mattresses from one sector to another, and that's how we saw each other from afar.

We had a certain solidarity with "the bald ones," who were the soldiers doing their military service. They would tell us our location and, in turn, where our families were waiting outside the compound. Then the young guards, who came from the north, would throw us those packages dropped at night from the... through the windows of the dressing room.

abroad.

During the time I was detained at the stadium, I witnessed the military's complete disorganization regarding the prisoners' personal information. I believe they had little clarity about our identities; so many people were coming and going from the stadium.

However, among us, at the pool, with my fellow inmates, there was a spirit of solidarity and support, although because of everything that was happening daily with the other inmates, I didn't feel the same way. With them, the situation was different. It was difficult to forge a deep connection. It's so overwhelming, painful, and hard.

What you experience every day is that you simply cannot establish a closer bond.

Being and feeling trapped, the anguish of uncertainty, the fear, the sadness, it all overwhelmed me, as did my complete lack of communication with the outside world. I didn't know what was happening outside. The soldiers wouldn't give us any news of what was going on.

Our contact was that, from time to time, we received small things that could be brought in.

By then, the Red Cross had already begun operating in Chile and they were going to visit the prisoners.

That's when I received a package from my parents.

They sent me very high-calorie things, but what I remember most were some dates. I didn't eat them, but they must have sent them to me to keep me energized. My poor parents must have had a terrible time with me.

By that time, the Red Cross had already begun operating in Chile and were going to visit the prisoners.

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them to me to keep me energized

Food at the stadium was scarce, once a day, and they gave us tea, something like that. The soldiers prepared it in cauldrons like those in the regiments, in giant pots.

They gave us a portion in a small light blue melamine bowl, which they brought with a spoon. One of the usual dishes was lentils, and I wasn't eating them at that time, which caused me several problems. I had a hard time in that respect. I was hungry.

There were some trees and a little path formed. Then a guy would come with a piece of paper in his hand and say your name, after which they would take you for questioning.

The most terrible abuses against women, in my experience, occurred during interrogations in the Colosseum, upstairs. There are many situations I could describe: the soldiers ridiculed our bodies, laughing at them: "Ah, she doesn't have breasts, so she's good for nothing." They groped us and threatened us repeatedly; they applied electricity during torture: "We're going to kill you," "I'm going to cut your hair," "We're going to rape you." And they used derogatory terms, calling us, for example, "whores." Well, all of that happened.

Other female colleagues had it worse because they suffered mock executions. That was the case with the teachers from Buin. However, you think, "It could happen to me at any moment," meaning you live with the uncertainty and fear of whether it will happen or not. People were disappearing; we saw it, we heard about people who were killed there. We heard the gunshots at night. The truth is, you're living on a knife's edge; you have no security, no safety net, you don't know if you'll live the next two hours. It's a situation, a constant state of tremendous vulnerability, anguish, and fear.

There was a lot of solidarity; we shared what little we had with lovely people, with whom I identified because of their own stories and their work. Extraordinary women who welcomed and accepted me, creating a bond of affection that, being older than me, was very rewarding.

All in all, I think the most positive thing was meeting some fantastic people. Elena Gálvez, who was arrested at the stadium before me, was with me, as were Haydée²⁰⁹ and "The Ladies of Buin," as we called them. Sonia, whose head was shaved, was another dear friend. Also present were María Ormeño²¹⁰, Lucy Lorsch, María Cecilia, whom we nicknamed "La Condorito," Lucía Neira, Sandra and Sonia Palestro, Sonia Rivas, and so many others.

There was a lot of solidarity; we shared what little we had with wonderful people, with whom I identified because of their own stories and their work. Extraordinary women who welcomed and accepted me, creating a bond of affection that, despite their being older than

208. These teachers were part of the group of teachers from the Consolidated School of Buin, arrested on October 10, 1973. They were first taken to the detention center at Cerro Chena and then transferred to the National Stadium. When the Stadium closed its facilities as a detention center, these seven teachers were taken to the Good Shepherd Women's Correctional Facility in Santiago.

209. This refers to Haydée Azócar Mansilla, Director of the Consolidated School, a member of the Socialist Party, and the teacher who led the group of the "Professors of Buin," or the "Little Ladies of Buin," as they were also called. After the National Stadium closed, Haydée was transferred along with her companions to the El Buen Pastor Women's Correctional Prison.

210. It appears to be María Raquel Ormeño Valenzuela, who is listed in the detainees' lists at the National Stadium and the Women's Correctional Prison.

It was gratifying. Alongside them, I went on a journey: the Correctional Facility, Tres Álamos 211 , and Cuatro Álamos. I kept passing through, and we kept running into each other, and in many cases, very important and decisive bonds were formed. I would say that this was the only positive aspect of that period of confinement.

At the end of October, we were transferred at night to the Correctional Facility. It was known that the stadium had to be vacated because a soccer match was scheduled. I have the feeling that we brought that first stage of confinement to an end, and, as expected, this was carried out in a terrifying way, due to the manner in which the operation to move the inmates was performed: we were sleeping, lying down, and suddenly, they shone giant spotlights on us, obviously to wake us up.

They started shouting and giving orders, they made us come out and line up in the middle of the darkness, illuminated by spotlights that did not allow us to see our jailers.

They started calling us names. If your name was called, you had to step forward and stand in the other group. It was very violent. The scene was beyond sinister and reminded you of the Nazis in Germany. Some people were released, while a large group of us were taken to the Good Shepherd Women's Correctional Prison. I remember we also learned that the men were being taken to Chacabuco. other prisons.

The stadium was a kind of transitional phase. I was there for a very short time, and everything was very unstable. People were constantly coming and going, being taken away, being brought back—constant changes throughout the day, a lot of movement of soldiers, cops, all sorts of people. You had no control over the situation and, therefore, you were in a state of emergency, so to speak, emotionally, psychologically, and physically. There wasn't much room to plan beyond the next hour. I mean, you didn't know if you were going to be alive that afternoon. It was that simple.

We were transferred to the Correctional Facility, which was run by nuns. When we arrived, they already had a place prepared for us: it was called "The Day Yard," which was originally for prostitutes. They moved them to another place, and we were left with only three women convicted of common crimes. There was another yard for "The Executed," those who were serving long sentences, and also "The Yard"

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211. Tres Álamos was located at 53 Canadá Street, near Vicuña Mackenna and Departamental Avenues in Santiago. It was opened in June 1974 as a "transit detention center" for detainees, both men and women, and was administered by the Carabineros (Chilean National Police). It had a constant population of approximately 400 detainees, including "about 150 women." From this location, prisoners were transferred to Cuatro Álamos, where they were held incommunicado.

"The Blues," which was the one with the isolation cells. There was a fourth courtyard, the one for the women who had their children. All these areas housed common prisoners, except for us, who were the political prisoners.

The military tried to force those women who arrived at the prison "condemned" into a state of "final execution." There were about five or six of them, mostly from the regions. Among those I remember were Angélica Benavides, from Talca, Rosa Quero, from the Coquimbo area, and Viola Muñoz, a university professor in Arica.

They were all incredibly sad. I also ran into Sonia Rivera there.

who was a political prisoner and was in a state of "dead prison" since they had allowed her to live in one of the isolation cells.

In response, we started a movement to rescue them, to get them out of that yard, because they were political prisoners, not common criminals, so to speak. Eventually, we managed to get them transferred to our prison, although we couldn't do it for Sonia. She was a member of the People's Organized Vanguard and had been prosecuted before, for an incident that occurred during the Popular Unity government.

While I was in La Correccional I didn't go

I was neither prosecuted nor convicted, much less in the Stadium. We're talking about entering prison at the end of October 1973, and I still didn't know why I was imprisoned: people were being killed outright. Everything was very fragile and uncertain; they killed people on mere suspicion. There were many executions, people disappeared during that period; it was one of the hardest times. The legal proceedings began much later; in my case, it was during 1974. Therefore, those of us who arrived at the Correctional Facility from the Stadium didn't yet have any formal charges filed against us. Eventually, I obtained my prisoner certificate and they gave me the decree of my expulsion from the country. I had two trials.

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.....
212. Sonia Rivera Calderón belonged to the People's Organized Vanguard (VOP). As a result of her participation in its actions, she was arrested in 1971, at the age of 27. According to a document from the Vicariate of Solidarity (1992), she was sentenced to life imprisonment. She spent eight years in prison and then, in mid-1979, was expelled from Chile with a 20-year banishment.

Under the State Security Law: one for Gasco and another for Coca Cola.

Although I was acquitted, I remained imprisoned.

At first, when we arrived, we were all cut off from the outside world; visitors weren't allowed. That came much later. The cells were communal, and there were sheds in the courtyards where the beds were lined up side by side. The largest shed held about 100 prisoners, and the others held between 8 and 12. The nuns told us where to sleep: I was assigned to the large shed. Each of us had a single metal cot. Over time, our families were able to bring in things like toiletries, blankets, and other everyday items. I think it took about two months before we were able to have a slightly more comfortable situation.

I was detained for about a year at the Correctional Facility. During that year, our situation improved thanks to our demands and organization: we had a bed, we could put our belongings on the floor, packages started arriving, and with that, we gradually acquired more things, like a toothbrush, which was a luxury. With these additions, you began to settle in, to live. Much later, my parents managed to get a heater in because we were freezing.

I remember an anecdote: I come from a family that owned an ice cream factory in Ñuñoa, and back then, an uncle of mine would bring ice cream for everyone. It was incredible; even the nuns received some, of course. Boxes of chocolates would also arrive, and I'd give one to the nuns closest to me. Others received different things, and we'd share them.

Through this opening, our situation began to improve, of course, always within an environment of adversity, hostility, and absolute precarity. And other, less pleasant situations were part of daily life: there was only one bathroom for the entire compound! There was no hot water, and the toilets were permanently clogged to the brim with excrement. Through the Red Cross, we later managed to get a water heater installed, and we had hot water, which gave us a little more dignity.

They made us leave this giant cell or shed, and we had to spend all day outdoors, wandering around even in winter, rain or cold. There were very few covered areas, so we could only move around the courtyard. There was a dining hall, but we couldn't be in it after mealtimes. Part of the hardship was also having to carry a bag with everything we needed during the day because, when we got up, they locked the dormitories until dawn.

bedtime.

To resist this routine,
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To resist this routine, we started thinking that we had to do something to keep our mental health afloat. We began to organize ourselves and created courses on different topics:

Each of us shared our skills with the others. This led to the creation of several workshops. One of them dealt with political topics, but we had to manage it haphazardly, and of course, without any books. Viola Muñoz was the philosophy teacher. Whenever a nun or guard came in, we would obviously start talking about something else, like the stars in the sky.

There were other, less risky activities, like sewing, where they taught you how to make patterns to sew your own clothes. Unfortunately, I never learned. I always liked it, but I don't have the talent for that kind of thing. On the other hand, I did better with my gymnastics and yoga classes, because I had learned them beforehand. Besides, I was knitting at that time—I come from a family of women knitters—and I had a lot of success with my workshop. Several women learned to knit, made clothes for themselves, and I made a lot of clothes for the children of some of the other women. Nowadays, when we get together, they laugh their heads off remembering when they showed off their knitting and I'd tell them, "We have to unravel the whole thing." Organizing these activities kept us busy, allowed us to survive mentally, and cope with this confinement in a different way.

We had a sinister nun in charge of us, Sister Mariana. She was mean; she did everything she could to keep us in the worst conditions, threatening us every day, punishing us for anything, watching over us, and refusing our requests, among many other things. We argued with her quite a lot, especially about the deplorable state of the kitchen. Once, we opened a storeroom and realized that the nuns preferred to let things rot rather than give us food. They gave us potato peel soup, and the vegetables would rot before they even gave them to us.

It was at that moment that we decided that the kitchen had to be passed on to us.

Ximena helped us get the kitchen back in order . It turned out that the Mother Superior was going to take the University Entrance Exam, and I don't remember how, but Ximena offered to tutor her. Taking advantage of this connection, we explained that we had agreed to get rid of Fresia, the common inmate who was in charge of the kitchen, and take over the cooking ourselves, which was awful.

After a while, they handed over the kitchen to us, and we organized ourselves into shifts. There had to be one person who knew how to cook and two or three others to help. At the same time, packages sent from abroad started arriving. We suggested that it would be a good idea to donate some of the items that could improve the meals; the rest could be stored. It was an extraordinary experience, one I cherish dearly—fun, challenging, and positive—because you had to feed 100 or more people for a whole week: the challenge was figuring out how to make fluffy rice for 100. We ate better and gave our families a sense of satisfaction.

After a while, they gave us the kitchen, and we organized ourselves into shifts. There had to be one person who knew how to cook and two or three others to help out. At the same time, packages sent from abroad started arriving.

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colleagues.

In addition to the above, another idea emerged that turned out to be a great success. Outside the kitchen, where there was a vacant lot near some unused cells, Lucy, who was a historian, said to us one day: "Let's make a garden."

We asked him how he could possibly come up with such a crazy idea, how we were going to do it. "We'll work the land, remove the stones, and plant," he told us. And, finally, we did it thanks to his determination and tenacity. It was incredible!

You'd see her digging out the stones, and thin as she was, she'd grab a wheelbarrow full and go dump them somewhere. As she started working, many others joined in: "I'll help you." Before long, a veritable garden appeared.

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213. Refers to Ximena George-Nascimento.

214. The Academic Aptitude Test PAA is the entrance test for traditional universities, currently PSU.

We had everything. The vegetables—lettuce, chard, tomatoes—and all the associated work, both physical and technical, from identifying the seeds and weeding to pruning, helped improve our quality of life. The nuns were amazed because we weren't just eating in prison; the produce went outside. We met the needs of men's prisons and also of some of our fellow inmates' families. We sent them tomatoes, lettuce, whatever we had.

At the Correctional Facility, I was one of the first to be held incommunicado. They locked me up in "The Blues" on the orders of Prosecutor Rolando Melo of the Second Military Prosecutor's Office. There was a visiting yard where you would sometimes meet with your lawyer, mostly for administrative matters, but for interrogations you had to leave the prison. On one occasion, we were transported in a prisoner transport truck. It was surprising when they put me in that vehicle for the first time: I was there as a "prisoner," and in that condition, I observed the world through the bars of the van.

That was amazing, seeing the city, the people going about their daily lives, and me behind bars. One of the interrogations was at the Second Military Prosecutor's Office, run by Rolando Melo, who was a despicable man who constantly threatened me, although he never physically assaulted me. This place was in the Ministry of Defense, in the basement, and you could see the prisoners arriving, all in chains.

We women suffered mistreatment during interrogations; many arrived back at "La Corre" in bad shape, especially when they were first admitted. Those of us who had been there longer tried to act as caregivers. We tried to protect them, to tell them they were now among friends. I remember there was a girl much younger than me who didn't speak; she was so traumatized that she only made guttural noises. We took her in. She was terrified and screamed at night.

We carried a sort of medicine box that we had obtained from the Red Cross and other clandestine entries we made, so we had a stock of painkillers for stomach pain and first aid items.

At night many of them had terrible nightmares, they complained, cried, and screamed; I imagine it must be like being in a psychiatric hospital.

At the Correctional Facility there was no physical torture; interrogations took place in other facilities. However, there were punishment cells and solitary confinement. I was taken to one for several weeks. The conditions there were much worse than in my cell: it was a very narrow, tiny cell with a miserable cot, made of something like wool, and it was full of insects, bedbugs—I had never seen them before. Later

At the Correctional Facility there was no physical torture; interrogations were conducted in other facilities. However, there were punishment cells and solitary confinement. I was taken to one for several weeks. The conditions there were much worse than in my cell: it was a very narrow, tiny cell with a miserable cot, made of something like wool, and it was full of insects, bedbugs—I had never seen them before.

After much arguing and demanding as much as I could, they agreed to fumigate the place. Of course, with me inside, I almost suffocated. If I needed to go to the bathroom, an armed guard with a machine gun would accompany me, and I had to relieve myself in front of him. I don't know how I survived all that.

Now we can laugh about it, but the conditions we had in "La Corre" were very difficult: for example, at a certain time, around 10 at night, they would turn off the lights, and then what were we supposed to do? You had to move around, from one place to another, trying to find someone to talk to and pass the time. One day, someone brought in a radio and we started listening to Radio Moscow, under our cots.

Ximena also charmed the Spanish priest who was going to the prison into bringing a portable record player. From the day he arrived, we

started listening to tangos, and then at night it was a show: some of the women, the most passionate about tango, would sing or act. There was one who sang Edith Piaf songs spectacularly in French. Her name was Monique²¹⁵, Mónica Hermosilla, a teacher at the Alliance Française, who had been imprisoned several times for taking people in her Citroën to seek asylum at the embassy. She had a hard time. She died years later in Brussels, and I remember her singing and doing stripteases in our cell, all to make us laugh and lift our spirits.

With all these initiatives, in the end, we made these spaces, which couldn't have been more hostile, more habitable. Even so, I always had the anxiety of wondering what was going to happen next. Those were moments of great anguish and fear when the police officer would come with a piece of paper in his hand and say, "I've come to get so-and-so," and they would take someone away, because sometimes they never came back. When someone was released, we would say goodbye by singing to them.

215. The participation of Mónica Hermosilla Jordens, Monique, in this event is also described in the account of Lucía Neira.

I had two military trials, both for State Security. I don't know what threat I could have posed to the State, at five feet tall and, I don't know, maybe 110 pounds? The trials were held without my presence and without a defense attorney; I never knew exactly what charges they brought against me. One of those cases was dismissed. And then, out of the blue, they decided to transfer me to Tres Álamos.

I was detained in Tres Álamos and Cuatro Álamos. They informed me of my transfer from La Correccional, obviously without telling me why or where they were moving me to.

All I heard was, "Grab your things, we're taking you." At that moment you think, "What happened?" because you don't know what's going on. Without knowing where you're going, you're being transported and escorted by men in civilian clothes, not by police officers. You don't recognize the vehicle you're in, and well, you're completely disoriented, uncertain, and afraid because you don't know what might happen to you. Nobody explains anything; you just receive orders and hear shouts. Keep in mind that, at that point, I had been imprisoned for over a year.

Tres Álamos was a house, and later the military built cells into it. In one of these, I was taken in by people I knew, because they had also come from "La Corre." I settled into a bunk. In terms of the conditions of the place, it was like going back to the stadium: a lot of hardship, anguish, fear, uncertainty. They were very small spaces, a building that looked like a concentration camp.

Clearly, there was a setback in this aspect.

Another similar thing was the constant flow of people coming and going. Despite this, my group in the cell remained intact. People were being released, but the pace was slower, more deliberate. There was significant mistreatment of the female inmates. Many were likely awaiting trial and, therefore, remained there longer.

Just like at the correctional facility in Tres Álamos, we had the roll call routine. All of us, usually in the morning, had to be in the yard, and they would call out, "Nuria Núñez," and you had to answer with your second last name. This was to check if you hadn't escaped, if we were all there; it was a daily headcount. Later, they transferred me to Cuatro Álamos, where there were tiny cells, and the roll calls were carried out.

Just like at the correctional facility in Tres Álamos, we had the roll call routine. All of us, usually in the morning, had to be in the yard and they would say, "Nuria Núñez," and you had to answer with your second last name. This was to make sure you hadn't run away, if we were all there; it was a daily count.

interrogations. These centers are next to each other, although they are separate buildings. At Tres Álamos, we also tried to organize a communal kitchen, but there was much less infrastructure; there was no kitchen. We wanted to improve, above all, the fresh produce, or the fruit, you know, that kind of thing.

When I arrived at Tres y Cuatro Álamos, they gave me a medical exam, documenting my condition upon arrival. I remember my time in these centers as a period of great instability, of heightened distrust among us; you were more suspicious of people. This became more pronounced due to the increased uncertainty about who was who, so to speak. Fear never left me.

A month or a month and a half passed, and one day they called me and told me they were going to transfer me again, without saying where. The same old worries resurfaced: "What could have happened?" Specifically, they told me they would give me another medical examination: "You're leaving here," they said, adding, "We need to certify that you're leaving alive and in good condition." The news shocked me; I hadn't expected it. Despite the relief of knowing I would be free, the conclusion of the medical exam didn't bring good news: The doctor told me I was about to die. "Your blood pressure is very high; your heart is going to explode," he said. However, they didn't care at all; they didn't give me any medication, nothing!

As a result of several illnesses that befell me after prison, I currently have a weak heart and use a pacemaker.

I was transported in a private car with men in civilian clothes; I was the only person on board. During the ride, I asked where they were taking me. I was disoriented; I didn't know if we were going north or south. "We can't say," one of them replied.

We arrived back at the place called "the cops" 216, in downtown Santiago. I'm not entirely sure if it was the same day or the next, since the whole process was brief, but they took me to an interrogation room and told me I was going to be deported, but they didn't give me any reasons. They gave me a week to leave the country. I had to go into exile.

During my time in prison, at La Correccional, among the visitors was, as I mentioned before, the International Red Cross. There were also other institutions that appeared and acted in solidarity with Chile at that time.

As a strategy to gain access to where we were, they disguised themselves as

216. The way in which the officers of the Chilean Investigative Police (PDI) are called in common language.

relatives of some of the inmates. We collaborated: we made lists with information about the prisoners and sent them to these organizations so they would know who was incarcerated and where.

Several progressives, who had lived in Chile during the Popular Unity government and, working from universities, had organized support committees for the Allende government in Germany. When the coup occurred, these committees were strengthened. They sent someone, posing as a Protestant priest, to the prison to see what was happening. In this way, they compiled lists of the detainees and their places of confinement. The Germans requested these lists to carry out the protocols for leaving Chile and entering Germany.

As I was saying, I was being held at the Investigations unit when I was notified of my expulsion. I had to figure out where I was going to go. They called my parents and they came. Finally, and quite by chance, while I was in Investigations, I received a notification from Germany regarding my departure. I had no contact with that country, and I didn't speak the language. It all stemmed from one of those lists that circulated in the prison. The fake priest did his job, which allowed me to obtain the visas and later request asylum.

I spent nearly five days detained until my departure to the Santiago airport. I left with only the clothes on my back and no money. My family managed to get me 50 dollars (today that would be roughly 20,000 pesos). My partner was deported under the same conditions, and we met up to board the plane. We got on, escorted by guards. When I settled into my seat, I didn't really know if I was under arrest or not. No one told me I was free and could do whatever I wanted. I looked around and didn't know who was sitting next to me. It was very unsettling. Something clicked in my head: first, the distrust of not knowing who the other passengers were, not knowing where I was going, what was going to happen to me; and second, not knowing if I could move around, if I had to ask permission to go to the bathroom, etc. That's when I saw Jessica Ulloa²¹⁷ sitting

When we realized we were free, that the plane was starting to take off, we said: "Let's go have a drink

"Beer, my dear." The funny thing about the situation is that back then you had to pay for beer on board, we didn't know that, and I had to use my 50 dollars.

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217. Jessica Ulloa Vidal appears on the Valech Commission list as having been expelled from the country in 1974.

Further back, and then, in this business of testing every two minutes to see where our personal space was, we asked to change seats. Now we were together. I think the entire airline staff knew. We still felt like prisoners. When we realized we were free, that the plane was starting to take off, we said, "Let's go get a beer, my dear." The funny thing is, back then you had to pay for beer on board, we didn't know that, and I had to use my 50 dollars.

Jessica was being deported to Israel and we were going to Berlin, according to our paperwork. She confessed that she didn't want to go to her destination. She asked us for help. We had a layover in Frankfurt, where we were supposed to separate. The police took us off the plane, and we sat in an office at the airport. Everything was still very uncertain. The wait lasted about three hours. During that time, I went to ask a police officer, in English, because I didn't speak German at the time, if we could go for a walk, and he replied, "Of course, why not!" Only then did we know we were free! During our walk, we took the opportunity to find a counter for a Spanish-speaking airline and explained our situation. They helped us change Jessica's flight destination. Finally, she left for Paris.

We were put on a plane bound for West Berlin from Turkey. It was late December 1974, and the Cold War was in full swing. We arrived at a military airport occupied by the Americans. It was winter, there was snow, and the place was full of tanks. Everything we heard was in German, and we didn't understand a word. We followed the throng of people walking across the tarmac; there weren't jet bridges back then, so we decided to follow the Turks. That's how we got to the security checkpoint where they searched us. We didn't have much with us. We managed to get through the entire security process without speaking, and they led us to a waiting room. I'll never forget that feeling: alone, looking around, not knowing what to do or where to go. But then we realized that Amnesty International and a professor from the University of Berlin were there. They knew my partner had arrived, but they didn't know I was there. I'm convinced that if I had traveled alone, no one would have come looking for me; women were insignificant. That's how I arrived at

West Berlin.

Once there, the first thing I did was request asylum. My passport was an expulsion document, valid only for leaving Chile, so I was left without any documentation. For a while, I had to live with a piece of paper that had my photo on it and I couldn't leave Berlin. The Germans who were showing solidarity with Chile treated me very well; I always

Their support and accompaniment. I lived there for 14 years and was the mother of a daughter and a son. For 13 years they were stateless children, without nationality.

I wondered what I could do once I arrived and thought the best thing was to study.

The first thing, of course, was to learn German, otherwise I couldn't enroll. That period was tough. I had nothing from Chile that connected me to German culture, nothing I could say, like "my parents are German" or "my grandmother isn't." I started from scratch. Once I took the exams to see if I was ready to attend classes, the university gave me a "minimum enrollment." Later, when I had mastered the language, they granted me a full enrollment. At the end of that period, I decided to study Sociology, as well as Psychology, Political Science, and Literature.

University was wonderful.

discovery, that's where I became a feminist.

The world opened up to me, I met new people

Things, I got closer to different people,
with life stories

very different from mine, I learned things
valuable aspects of each of them.

the German feminist movement was

at its peak during that time.

I am, in general, a curious person; I check,

I look, I read, I study;

And so, along with others, I organized a

solidarity group for Chilean women, with

the imprisoned and exiled women who were arriving. During this university period, I also became more involved with the German women; I have excellent friends there, fellow students of mine.

The feminist movement greatly supported my personal and intellectual development, creating spaces just for women that fostered connection, identity, and the formulation of demands.

University was a wonderful
discovery; it's where I became a
feminist. The world opened up to me,
I learned new things, I met
different people with life stories
very different from my own,
and I learned valuable things from
each of them.
The German feminist movement was
at its peak at that time.

I'm talking about bars, cinemas, study centers, meeting places, discussion forums, bookstores—everything. The idea was that we had to be ourselves, just be there and talk amongst ourselves.

Great German thinkers emerged. All of that influenced my development: the way this began to be incorporated offered a different perspective on certain phenomena. I had the opportunity to meet prominent figures in German intellectual circles, attend lectures and colloquia, connect with people from different countries and cultures, enjoy wonderful libraries, research and study centers, travel, and so on. Those years were crucial in my development.

and learning. I think I was lucky to have lived in West Berlin during that time.

I have the feeling that West Berlin has always been at the forefront of these libertarian movements; it had a big impact on me.

That's when I opened my eyes and became very involved in this struggle; even all my small research projects at university had to do with women.

Then I worked on women and development issues and won some grants: I traveled back and forth doing research. But my socialization, my learning, and my personal growth clearly took place during my university years.

My life in Germany was very difficult financially, even though I graduated from university with good grades and had a job. For example, I would go to East Germany to buy shoes for the children. We Chileans had a special status: you had to register and get a visa indicating your travel dates. It was a day pass only; you couldn't spend the night there. I ended up living in the western part of the country, only because the Germans who had arranged for me to leave were in Germany.

They were from Chile.

We were very poor, living as guests in the homes of other Chileans who had arrived earlier. After a while, German solidarity helped us find social housing. We lived there until I separated from my partner. It was a hard life. I had to study and work. I had won a scholarship at university, but it wasn't enough.

Besides, she had two children and did charity work; she was always running around. I mean, it was too much!

It was a time of great effort; university was incredibly demanding. I cleaned houses and hotels to finance my studies. In the summers, through a university job placement service, I worked in a factory: I started at 6 a.m. and worked all day. Even with all that, I didn't have

vacation, no savings, nothing. Then I had

Despite the difficulties, I feel absolutely beneficiary of having studied in Germany. I had them all. I seized the opportunities. I still maintain relationships with people from there, and that's extraordinary. I was able to study for free; the university supported me so that I could study and always considered and protected my motherhood.

.....
218. German Democratic Republic.

A job as a sociologist at a Latin American research center changed things a lot. Despite the difficulties, I feel incredibly fortunate to have studied in Germany. I had every opportunity and I took full advantage of them. I still keep in touch with people from there, and that's amazing.

Furthermore, I was able to study for free; the university supported me so that I could study and always considered and protected my motherhood.

In the early 1980s, I had a scholarship and was in Peru, working with women in the shantytowns. A group of us met in Lima for the Second Latin American Feminist Meeting.²¹⁹ It was Natacha²²⁰ from Mexico, Catalina²²¹ from England, and me from Germany—all socialist feminists. We were still socialist activists. As a result of that meeting, the idea of creating the Women's Institute²²² was born. We saw that there were several centers, but we wanted to create something new. La Morada²²³ existed, as did CEM²²⁴. We saw that there was a space; we felt that a more political feminism was needed, one that addressed what was happening in the country: the dictatorship, the murders and disappearances, poverty, and exclusion. Based on these objectives, we created the Women's Institute. In that discussion, we formed a group of five: Soledad Larraín and Adriana Muñoz joined us. Then we obtained legal status, and German organizations helped us with the initial funding to begin implementing projects.

My exile lasted a little over 14 years. Later, my name appeared on one of the lists of expelled Chileans who could return to the country. I went back to Chile in 1989 for the plebiscite. I had to decide whether to stay in Germany or not; the time had come to decide for myself where I wanted to live. I decided to try to see if

219. The Second Latin American and Caribbean Feminist Meeting was held in Lima in 1983. Among its milestones was the declaration of July 22 as International Domestic Workers' Day.

220. This is Natacha Molina García, founder of the Women's Institute.

221. Catalina Palma, founder of the Women's Institute.

222. It is currently called the Women's Institute Foundation.

223. The Women's House La Morada was created in 1983 by a group of women, including Julieta Kirkwood, in order to stimulate organization and spread the proposals of feminism.

224. The Center for Women's Studies (CEM) was founded in 1984 by a multidisciplinary group of researchers in the social and economic sciences. The Center is dedicated to gender studies and conducts research, training, dissemination, and consulting, especially in the areas of Labor and Employment, Citizenship, and Politics and Public Policy.

My exile lasted a little over 14 years. Later, my name appeared on one of the lists of expelled Chileans who could return to the country. I returned to Chile in 1989 for the plebiscite.

I had to decide whether to stay in Germany or not; the time had come to decide for myself where I wanted to live. I decided to see if I could live in Chile.

I could live in Chile. At that time, the Institute was just starting to operate.

I arrived and voted. And that's when I decided I was staying here. It wasn't an easy decision; I had worked incredibly hard to get a doctoral scholarship, and I had to give it up.

It was a PhD in Sociology, but I didn't have the time: I got involved in Chilean daily life, the Institute won me over and I left my academic interest behind.

I returned to Chile with my two children, who were born in Berlin, and today my family is scattered across different countries. My daughter lives in Germany; she left because

she couldn't adapt to life in Chile. My son stayed here. These are the harsh consequences of the experience of exile, of a life abroad. She started her own family there; I have two German grandchildren. I miss them dearly, but I understand and respect their choice.

In Germany I denounced on various occasions the repression and human rights violations that occurred in Chile and that I experienced firsthand, but I never go into detail.

In my case, it doesn't seem necessary; it upsets me. When I returned to Chile, it was very difficult for me to enter the National Stadium for the first time. I've never been back to La Correccional, Tres Álamos, or Cuatro Álamos. I've had to go to where the cops are, over there on General Mackenna, but only for paperwork, or once when I was robbed nearby. Over the years, I've realized I suffer from claustrophobia: when, due to various circumstances, I've been in a small space, I notice that it deeply upsets me, that I have to do something to calm myself down; something is wrong with me. I didn't realize it before, but now it's happening more and more intensely. When I was in Germany, I didn't go to therapy because it was private and I didn't have the money to pay for it. In Chile, I did go for a while, and then again years later, but I never went to PRAIS225, for example. Many of us, the survivors of the dictatorship, have had to stand on our own two feet, fight for survival and for our mental health. Nothing has come easily to us; we have suffered great losses.

225. Comprehensive Health Care and Reparation Program (PRAIS) available for qualified victims of human rights violations in the recent dictatorship and their immediate family members.

and immeasurable pain, but we continue fighting with honesty and passion.

The other day I was talking with some friends from my time in prison, with whom I'm very close, about our resilience. It's incredible, incredible. We've been through everything in our lives and we're still standing, old, but fighting. Wow! How do we do it?! That's the big question: you have to make something positive out of it, a learning experience, and keep moving forward.

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“Camarines de Mujeres”, Testimonios de prisioneras políticas en el Estadio Nacional, es el resultado del trabajo de investigación ejecutado por la Fundación Instituto de la Mujer, financiado por el Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes, FONDART Regional, Convocatoria 2018, Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes y el Patrimonio.

Este libro entrega una mirada sobre nuestro pasado reciente a partir de los relatos y memorias de siete mujeres que estuvieron presas en el Estadio Nacional, durante los meses de Septiembre y Noviembre de 1973. Tiene la particularidad de acercarnos a uno de los aspectos más crudos de la Dictadura Cívico Militar Chilena, trasladando el foco desde la victimización hacia las estrategias de resistencia que las mujeres desarrollaron en la prisión; así como la generación de vínculos solidarios que permitieron afrontar un tipo de violencia represiva que tuvo también especificidades de género.

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